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***The Muslim News: Playing Muslims in the Media Pitch,  
Penalties and Sport Champions***

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## Abstract

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The portrayal of Muslims in British mainstream media, particularly newspapers, is a subject of significant academic interest. Previous studies find that British newspapers frequently represent Muslims as a distinct and homogenous group, associating them with terrorist groups and framing them as a cultural threat. Orientalist representations have been observed, depicting Muslims as inherently problematic. Nevertheless, Muslims' own self-representation remains understudied and underexamined.

This research analyses the discourse of *the Muslim News*, the oldest, most enduring English-language newspaper catering to Muslims in the United Kingdom. Using Corpus Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, this thesis explores the similarities and differences in the discourses of *the Muslim News* and British mainstream newspapers from 1998 to 2009.

The findings reveal that, while reproducing some narratives observed in mainstream press, *the Muslim News (the MN)* is introducing new representations that 'pitch' alternative stories about Muslims in the media. While sustaining certain representations, such as the collectivisation of Muslims, *the MN* challenges mainstream discourse. It highlights Islamophobic attacks that Muslims are subject to, including their negative portrayal in mainstream press, and suggests that these hegemonic representations are part of a 'Muslim penalty'. Furthermore, *the MN* counters mainstream news by taking Muslims outside the frames of representation that associate them with terrorism, conflict and violence. Sports coverage consistently emerges in *the MN* as an important space to re-negotiate and reframe mainstream media discourses on Muslims. Sports stories maintain newsworthiness while enabling *the MN* to diverge from the negative coverage of Muslims in mainstream press and celebrate Muslim champions. Comparing such representations in a newspaper by and for Muslims to those produced by mainstream press further exposes contemporary Orientalist discourses and should be a subject of further study.

To my mother,  
For that old dream of seeing her loved one obtain a PhD.

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## Abbreviations

<i>BBC</i>	<i>British Broadcasting Corporation</i>
BNC	British National Corpus
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
MCB	the Muslim Council of Britain
MIV	Mutual Information Value
MWSF	Muslim Women's Sport Foundation
NMC	New Model Corpus
<i>the JC</i>	<i>the Jewish Chronicle</i>
<i>the MN</i>	<i>the Muslim News</i>
WATS	Widening Access Through Sport project

## Introduction

The growth of the Muslim population in Western countries over the last several decades has been accompanied by increased media attention on Muslims and their experiences. The media representation of Muslims has become a site of contestation in the institutional reports on minorities, the public debate on the media and academic research.

Media discourses on Muslims have been marked by antagonistic representations, as I shall explore in the literature review. Ahmed (1993) suggests that the demonization of Muslims in British media started with the Rushdie affair. The controversy surrounding the book's publication, *The Satanic Verses* (Rushdie, 1988), and Muslims' reactions to it (e.g. censorship, protests, Khomeini's death edict), as well as the media coverage of these events marked a division between British Muslims and their compatriots. Coupled with some Muslims' support for Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War, British Muslims' opposition to their country's foreign policy was interpreted as Muslims' willingness to separate themselves from the UK's interests, raising questions concerning their loyalty (Werbner, 2000). Halliday (2003) suggests that the British media depiction of Muslims reinforces the "Us" and "Them" division, arguing that these processes have resulted in an essentialist discourse drawing a monolithic image of Islam emphasizing its perceived ontological difference to the West. This rhetoric on Islam and Muslims therefore works to confirm ideas in 'the West' about Islam (Saeed, 2007).

Several studies about the media representation of Muslims in the UK, using various methodologies and scanning different time periods, engaged with questions about what/who is being represented, analysed how Muslims are being represented and attempted to explain why such representations exist. These studies, as I shall present in the next chapter, concluded that mainstream press in the UK negatively portray Muslims through stories on conflict and terrorism. While these studies answer some questions, they raise other more intriguing questions: who is deemed to represent British Muslims in the media? And consequently, who (i.e. individuals, institutions) and what (i.e. media outlet, content) have been considered a subject worthy of academic study when exploring these representations? These are some of the issues I will explore in this thesis.

While a plethora of studies, presented in the next chapter, were concerned with studying the portrayal of Muslims in dominant media platforms such as in the press (e.g. *The Times*) and on TV (e.g. *BBC*), media productions by minority groups – most relevantly, media produced by Muslims, have not been met with similar academic interest. Muslims' own visions, views and opinions, as expressed in their own media productions, remain understudied. It follows from this that while representations of a group generate increasing academic interest, the group's representation of itself is rarely met with similar interest. Paradoxically, a close look at the visibility of Muslims in mainstream media and research exposed the invisibility of Muslims' self-representation in academic research as I will discuss below.

My interest in this lacuna led me to choose representations of Muslims in a specific newspaper produced by and for Muslims (*the Muslim News*) as well as those for another religious minority – the Jewish one (*the Jewish Chronicle*) as the object of my study at the start of my doctoral research. I was intrigued by the question of self-representation, and its comparison to the external portrayal by mainstream media on the one hand, and the portrayal of Muslims in another minority newspaper (addressing a different religious minority – Jews) on the other. Initially, my interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its impact on the relations between Jews and Muslims in the United Kingdom underpinned the choice of these two religious minority newspapers. The research, in its inception phase, raised questions about the extent to which news and views on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict interfere with the representation of British Muslims in both newspapers, considering issues of identity, security and otherness. However, several technical, methodological and theoretical difficulties prevented this study from exploring the discourse on Muslims in *the Jewish Chronicle* (*the JC*), especially because of the inaccessibility of the data in *the Jewish Chronicle*. Moreover, the size of the collected data from *the Muslim News* (and the emerging findings) required additional time and resources for the data collection, annotation and analysis (as explained in the next chapter). This resulted in the study's exclusive dedication to exploring the discourse of *the Muslim News* in comparison to mainstream press. Furthermore, the methodology chosen for conducting this research limited the number of preconceived research questions – making it difficult to include the questions related to the choice of a Jewish newspaper and the interest in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Exploring the representation of Muslims in newspapers produced by other religious minorities (e.g. *the JC*) would require further studies which could be pursued in the future.

This research has therefore been restricted to British Muslims' self-representations in comparison to mainstream ones. In my study of the similarities and differences between *the Muslim News* and mainstream press, the analysis of two hundred thousand articles from British mainstream press across 12 years (1998-2009) by Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013) is considered as the main comprehensive reference for comparison in my research. As such, the collection of the data from *the Muslim News* follows the same timeframe and methodology. The methodology favours a corpus-driven approach. Instead of raising specific research questions that present risks of data selection and skewness, the study departs from two open questions, allowing the findings to raise subsequent questions and guide the research. The two general questions are: What is *the Muslim News* talking about? And how does it represent Muslims? The findings are then compared to those emerging from mainstream press, as revealed by previous studies, mainly Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013).

Chapter One of this thesis (Context of the Study) presents the context for this study in four parts. Starting with a historical overview of British Muslims (their migration, settlement in the UK and diversity) in the first part, the second part presents the literature review. Previous studies on media representations point to the derogatory and demonising portrayal of Muslims in the British mainstream media, indicating that Islamophobic attitudes in society are reflected in (and reinforced by) the media. A shared theoretical framework in all these studies is Orientalism. The framework is therefore presented and discussed in Chapter One, along with a description of the dominant and alternative discourses on Muslims in the British mainstream press.

The third part of Chapter One presents an overview of the media that cater to Muslim audiences in the UK. It also provides a detailed description of the selected newspaper for this study: *the Muslim News*. Besides the general information about the newspaper (e.g. type, circulation, audience), the various sections of the newspaper are described. Accounting for the historical context of the foundation of *the Muslim News*, the motive behind the choice of this newspaper (amongst other Muslim newspapers) is also presented.

The fourth part of Chapter One concerns the chosen methodology in this research. It starts with an outline of the cognitive and methodological biases that the selected methodology attempts to mitigate. Being a corpus-driven methodology, the analysis relies on reference corpora to interpret the findings, contextualize data and compare the results. Hence, the

different reference corpora considered in this study are displayed, including the corpus used in Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study (Islam-UK). While this corpus is the most relevant to my study, copyright constraints prevented access to it. However, four other important and available reference corpora were used as explained in the methodology.

Having presented the reference corpora, the analytical methods are then described: Corpus Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Starting with Corpus Analysis, the methodology section explains how the data was collected and how the corpus was built and annotated using grammatical tagging, semantic annotation and meta-data coding. Corpus Analysis tools used in this research are then outlined, including word sketch, word list, keywords and collocates. These tools are further explained in context, when in use in subsequent chapters.

Following the description of Corpus Analysis, the methodology section in Chapter One explains the use of CDA and the different analytical techniques used, such as legitimation and evaluation, semantic preference and discourse prosody. Considering the corpus-driven approach, other concepts related to CDA become useful throughout the analysis. They are described when in use in subsequent chapters. Finally, Chapter One accounts for methodological limitations in the study, including copyright issues, balance, comparability and other methodological limitations.

Chapter Two (The Big Picture: Playing Muslims in the Media Pitch) offers the “big picture” when analysing the data: it attempts to answer the two main research questions by analysing the corpus. The analysis is carried through three stages: First, the recurrent topics in the overall corpus are explored to detect what *the Muslim News* is talking about. The emerging findings suggest that the newspaper follows some mainstream trends in reporting about Muslims in connection to war and terrorism. Other practices in mainstream reporting about Muslims, such as collectivizing British Muslims as one “community” are also observed. However, the salience of these topics differs from mainstream press: while conflict is the most predominant topic in mainstream press, it is the least salient in *the Muslim News*. Moreover, other topics that are underreported in mainstream news about Muslims, such as hatred and racism, are found to be salient in *the Muslim News*, introducing a uniquely dominant topic in the newspaper: Islamophobia.

The second stage of the analysis, which attempts to explore how Muslims are represented, reveals the newspaper's emphasis on challenges that Muslims face. *The Muslim News* depicts Muslims in a variety of experiences, beyond those found in mainstream press. While following journalistic rules that determine the relevance and value of news stories, the *Muslim News* diversifies the way Muslims are represented in the media field, a field where representations can be reproduced, negotiated and/or contested with the way events and actors are classified, evaluated and represented.

The third stage of the analysis, which explores the titles of the articles, reveals an emphasis on Islamophobia. The findings in Chapter Two suggest that in the media arena where representations can be sustained, contested and/or challenged, the *Muslims News* attempts to balance portraying Muslims relevantly (along with the dominant mainstream discourse) and differently (by representing experiences and issues overlooked in mainstream press). This follows one of the most important criteria in news making: newsworthiness. A "media pitch" refers to the practice of presenting a journalistic story that can create interest in being covered, for being newsworthy, unique and exclusive. With its diverse topics, profiles and various reported experiences of Muslims, *the Muslim News* "pitches" stories about/to Muslims that can generate interest in them outside the topics of terrorism and conflict.

While the findings in Chapter Two map the salient topics and identify consistencies, they do not allow for a close examination of the differences and changes in these topics across time. This analysis is carried in Chapter Three (Diachronic Analysis: The Muslim Penalty) by examining the corpus diachronically. Quantitative and qualitative analysis throughout the years shed more light on the tendencies and patterns observed in Chapter Two. The diachronic analysis dissects the corpus into twelve time-periods, marked by milestone events (e.g. 9/11). The analysis follows the development, consistency and changes of topics in the newspaper across the years, complemented with the analysis of editorials and readers' letters to examine editorial choices and readers' expectations. While specific topics (e.g. terrorism) are found to mark specific periods, stories highlighting Islamophobia and discrimination are present throughout the different time-periods.

The diachronic analysis reveals a tendency to present Islamophobia as a principal topic and terrorism as a secondary one. Across the years, the coverage of terrorism becomes linked to the effects of anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism policies and practices on Muslims. These effects are discursively tied to the topic of Islamophobia and discrimination. Looking at

recurrent stories throughout the years, the analysis shows that *the Muslim News* increases its focus on the repercussions of terrorism, anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism on Muslims, highlighting stories where Muslims are victims of Islamophobia, war, violence, alienation and media negative biases.

The diachronic analysis reveals the newspaper's contestation of mainstream representations of Muslims, linking such representations to Islamophobia. The newspaper engages in a counter-discourse pitching stories about Islamophobia as part of "the Muslim penalty". As explained in Chapter Three, this is a penalty that Muslims are made to pay in light of the extensive media coverage of, and governmental response to, terrorism. Another recurrent topic across the years that emerges from the diachronic analysis is sport. This is the subject of Chapter Four.

In Chapter Four (Sport: Celebrating Muslims' Victory on the Media Pitch) articles on sport are collected, building a sub-corpus focusing on sport. This sub-corpus is marked by a positive portrayal of British Muslims. Muslims' excellence in sport is highlighted, suggesting an alternative framework in reporting about Muslims that is absent in mainstream press. Stories on sport competitions portray British Muslims as role models, emphasizing their integration into their society and their positive contribution to it. The analysis shows a recurrence of positive evaluative adjectives and a focus on Muslims' agency. Sport, as a site of fair play and competition, serves to counter the mainstream discourse on Muslims as it allows celebrating Muslims' championship and victory beyond the negative news stories on terrorism and Islamophobia.

The findings in Chapter Two, Chapter Three and Chapter Four are summarized and discussed in the last part of this thesis: the conclusion. The conclusion synthesizes the findings while tracking their analytical trajectory: the research departed from two open questions exploring the overall corpus, moving to more specific questions that are explored in (and raised by) the data in the dissected sub-corpora. Moving from the big picture to the diachronic analysis, and landing on the emerging topic of sport, this research shows how *the Muslim News* both follows and differs from mainstream reporting about Muslims in the UK. In the media field, *the Muslim News* (as a minority newspaper) can be overwhelmed by the dominant discourse of mainstream press, and so resorts to a "level playing pitch", sport, as a way to contest and counter mainstream representations.



*The Muslim News* attempts to subjugate mainstream representations and pitch alternative stories about Muslims that both generate new interest in Muslims and redefine what is newsworthy about them. It attempts to diversify and transform the portrayal of Muslims in the media, bringing them onto a level playing pitch where representations of Muslims can be negotiated, to become less monolithic and reductive.

The media field is a social *field* of power relations (Bourdieu, 1993) where actors compete and negotiate narratives in a struggle for symbolic and political resources. As in a sport pitch, the competition and negotiation in the media field between mainstream representations and minority voices is subject to 'rules' (e.g. newsworthiness). Playing Muslims in the media pitch by *the Muslim News* not only unpacks penalties (i.e. the Muslim penalty) but also highlights Muslim champions, especially in sport. Indeed, while highlighting the Muslim penalty in mainstream reporting, *the Muslim News* extends the newsworthiness of Muslims beyond Islamophobia and discrimination, pitching them as equal, contributing members of the British society who can proudly be its champions.

## **Chapter One**

### **Context of the Study**

“What will we do about the Muslim problem then?” – This is the question the UK’s most circulated daily newspaper, The Sun, asks in 2017 when discussing Brexit (Kavanagh, 2017). The controversial column alarms its readers to the “Muslim problem” while referring to Muslims in the UK (and Europe) in the context of terrorist attacks, violence against women and crime. The text was met with an outcry, leading to an investigation by the Independent Press Standards Organisation<sup>1</sup>. The debate between journalists and politicians over whether a “Muslim problem” exists in the UK overshadowed questioning the problematic portrayal of Muslims in the British media. Although a plethora of academic studies have demonstrated negative media biases against Muslims in the UK, negative coverage (e.g. regarding immigration, crime and terrorism) continues to dominate the public debate on Muslims. The ‘invisible problem’ of mainstream media representations of British Muslims could be tied to the ‘invisible voices’ of Muslims. Despite a growing number of Muslim media platforms and publications where British Muslims present their news and views, the discourse of Muslim media in Britain has been understudied. While broadsheet and tabloid newspapers are the dominant voices of the British press, minority press can function as an important vehicle of information and representation about and for ethnic and religious minority groups. The study of the content of Muslims’ media can shed light on how they represent themselves at times when they are controversially represented by others. My thesis aims to fill this gap in the study of Muslim press portrayal of Muslims, a minority that has historically grown to become the UK’s second largest religious group (Office for National Statistics, 2013, p.1).

#### **1. Muslims in the UK: Past and present**

The presence of Muslims in the UK has been documented since the 17th century. Hundreds of Muslims lived in England by the 1660s (Matar, 1997) as well as hundreds of Muslim converts amongst British traders and travellers in the 16th and 17th centuries (Colley, 2000).

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<sup>1</sup> The UK’s independent regulator for newspapers and magazines.

The establishment and growth of the East India Company<sup>2</sup> played an important role in increasing the immigration of Muslims to Britain in the 18th and 19th centuries, as agents of the company brought back Indian Muslim servants. The two centuries also witnessed a considerable migration of Indian Muslim seafarers working at the company (Gilliat-Ray, 2010). Starting from the mid-19th century, Muslim students increasingly moved to England for study (Ibid.). From 1860 to 1945, the recruitment of Muslims from colonies to work on coal fired ships increased the population of Muslims in Britain; by the end of the 19th century, it is estimated that 10,000 Muslims were living in the UK (Ansari, 2004). Their work opportunities were limited to underpaid labour. Consequently, their socio-economic status, combined with their different races, contributed to their image as “outsiders, not only because of their origins and visible racial difference, but also because they were regarded as being part of a migratory labouring underclass (...). They married women who were often from poor dockland areas of the cities, and were usually regarded as part of the uncivilized lower strata of society” (Gilliat-Ray, 2010, p.31).

The most significant growth of the Muslim community in the UK dates back to post 1950s, when Muslims migrated from various parts of the world, mainly the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan, Bangladesh and India) for economic opportunities and to escape conflict (i.e. following the creation of Pakistan). From 1970, more Muslims from Arab countries, Afghanistan and Iran settled in the UK as a refuge from political instability and conflict in their home countries (Ansari, 2004). In the last two decades of the 20th century, Somalians, Kurds and Algerians, also fleeing conflict in their countries, contributed to the rise of the Muslim population in the UK. As such, the Muslim population in the UK is marked by a rich diversity of ethnicities, languages and cultures. Their religious diversity is also noticeable with the different branches and schools of Islam followed by Muslims in the UK.

Gale and Hopkins (2009) report that Muslims accounted for 3 per cent of the British population with 1.6 million Muslims in the UK, during the time of the analysed data (2001 Census). High birth rates, immigration and conversion are the main reasons of the growth of the Muslim population in recent years. Almost half of this population is young (less than 25 years old), born in the UK (46%) and has Pakistani heritage (Ibid.). Other backgrounds (as mentioned above) contribute to the diversity of the Muslim population in the UK.

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<sup>2</sup> A British colonial trade company founded in 1600 that ruled the Indian subcontinent for over a century.

But since their early settlement four centuries ago, British Muslims have shared a common experience. In spite of their diversity, “their collective experience of exclusion and their common religious identity as Muslims recreated the basis for new bonds of association” (Gilliat-Ray, 2010, p.32). While Muslims in the UK brought with them a diversity of ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the definition and portrayal of British Muslims in the media have remained insensitive to these differences, reducing all the identities British Muslims embrace to a religious one that posits the existence of a homogenous Muslim community. Studies on mainstream newspapers revealed negative biases culminating in Islamophobic representations that demonize Muslims in the UK (Ameli et al., 2007). This is concluded in several studies on the portrayal of Muslims in the British press as discussed below.

## **2. Muslims and Islamophobia in the media**

The study of Muslims in the UK and their depiction in media and political discourses has gathered pace in the last two decades, particularly after the report of the Runnymede Trust Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia appeared in 1997. The report, *Islamophobia: a Challenge for Us All*, uncovered various forms of Islamophobic practices in the UK including the circulation of prejudices in the media coverage of Muslims and Islam. The report defined Islamophobia as “unfounded hostility towards Islam” (Ibid., p.4) manifested in violent behaviours against Muslims through the monolithic view of Islam as a hostile religion.

The above definition of Islamophobia has been challenged by scholars for its academic and empirical implications. The hostility towards Islam in the UK is expressed in antagonistic behaviours and attitudes towards Muslims from a wide range of distinctive or racial groups who came to the UK from former British colonies. Halliday argues that ‘anti-Muslimism’ would be a better term to use than Islamophobia as it “encompasses racist, xenophobic and stereotyping elements. The term ‘anti-Muslimism’ is used here to signify such a diffuse ideology, one rarely expressed in purely religious terms, but usually mixed in with other rhetorics and ideologies” (Halliday, 2003, p.160).

In this regard, Poole (2002) recalls the paradigm of racism when looking at Islamophobia suggesting that Islamophobia is a new form of racism. But unlike racism, Islamophobia does not explicitly target people from a particular race, origin or ethnicity – which is deemed unacceptable in Western societies. Instead, it tags British citizens with ‘different’ cultural practices as part of a religious community against which discrimination is ‘acceptable’. As such, disliking Muslims involves a complex mixture of xenophobia and racism. Muslims’ visibility has increased as ‘the signifier’ of otherness shifted from race to cultural practices, particularly since being a Muslim often comprises a projection of both (Hull, 1997).

This use of religious identity in discriminating against members of society is an easy stance in an increasingly secular ‘West’. As Hippler (1996) argues, the association of religion with irrationality perceived by Western societies permits these societies to ignore the socio-economic causes of alienation and separatism, and to advance a convenient argument to legitimize this hostility. This new expression of old racism (i.e. Islamophobia) is described by Silverman and Yuval-Davis (1998) as ‘cultural racism’, a form of hostility towards religion and culture rather than colour or origins. Meer and Modood (2010) suggest that the incorporation of both religious and racial discrimination in Islamophobia leads to the ‘racialisation’ of Islamic identity. For Van Dijk (1991), the problematization of immigration in the UK has shifted to Muslims as a cultural religious group depicted as inherently problematic and alien to British society and its values.

The multiplicity of British Muslims’ identities draws attention to the importance of understanding intersectionality when studying the representation of Muslims in the UK as representations navigate around an orbit of intersectionality involving ethnicity (resistance to migration waves), race and religion (anti-religious feelings in a secular society) as well as class and gender. This is particularly significant when looking at representations of Muslim women against the background of gender, race and power dynamics. Social studies have used intersectionality to examine the interlocking power paradigms in constructing systems of race, class and nation, as being interconnected rather than parallel. Collins (2000) argues that systems of oppression are interconnected and influenced by the intersectionality of the different social memberships an individual (or group) may carry, such as class, gender, ethnicity and religion.

The mercurial relations between power and representations can be captured in critical theories of post-colonialism, where complex media interpretations of Islam and Muslims are deconstructed with reference to their motifs and functions. An inevitable theoretical framework to consider in this research is therefore Said's *Orientalism*.

## **2.1. Orientalism**

Said (1978) identifies several configurations of the Orient as Orientalists have shaped it: it is the romanticized invention responding to a post-colonial nostalgia for a mystifying exotic place; it is the "Other" that builds a contrasting definition of the self, and it is the weaker civilization that needs to be reconstructed, protected and ruled over. Although these definitions of Orientalism evolve throughout different historical moments of intersection between 'the West' and 'the Orient', and circulate through diversified channels (political discourse, institutionalized scholarship and literature), they remain deep-rooted and sustained beyond moments of change, constructing Orientalism as a consistent and self-sustaining discipline, as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient" and as a political doctrine (Ibid., p.3).

This consistency resides in both the dialectic between knowledge and power as well as the dynamics behind the epistemological development of Orientalism as a field established by political will. The unavoidable contamination in representation, when "converting experience into expression" as Said puts it (2004, p.49), is neither an arbitrary nor an 'innocent' process. It transforms the presentation of people, events or ideas into interpreted and interpretive representations. Said suggests that such representations are driven by interests, planned with intention and carried out with systematic control. He proposes that this rationale underlies the consistent, coherent and self-sustained Orientalist discourse, and justifies its ontological dependence on enabling 'the West' to dominate 'the Orient'.

Said (1978) advances the notion of "Islamic Orientalism", one where the Orientalist expresses "ideas about Islam in such a way as to emphasize his as well as putatively for the Muslim's, resistance to change, to mutual comprehension between East and West, to the development of men and women out of archaic, primitive classical institutions and into modernity" (Ibid., p.263). Even at moments of change in the past, when the Orient's revolts against Western occupation pressed Orientalism to redraw itself, Orientalism's adaptive

response to the modern Orient succeeded to maintain the defeated image of ‘the Orient’, undermining its revolt and stressing its ‘inherent orientalism’.

This adaptation serves to protect the Western interests in keeping ‘the Orient’, at least in its representation, as a weaker and different Other that can be penetrated by the rationale developed by ‘the West’. This adaption of Orientalism is crucial to maintain the dominating position of the West. Said concludes that it was necessary for ‘the West’ to preserve Orientalism because the new emerging profile of an acting Orient threatens the power relations that Orientalism was conceived to produce and reproduce.

The *Orientalism* framework fuelled a long scholarly debate that continues to develop questions about power dynamics and examine intricate relations between political and academic discourses. Said’s *Orientalism* came under attack by some scholars who discussed its theoretical underpinnings and critiqued its methodology. The development of *Orientalism* relies primarily on Foucault’s discourse theory (1991) and presents itself as its applied paradigm. The allegiance of Said’s *Orientalism* to discourse theory was contested by Ahmad (1994) who criticised *Orientalism* for attempting to offer what he claimed to be “mutually incompatible definitions of the term ‘Orientalism’” (Ibid., p.179). In his discussion of realism and mimesis (Ibid., pp.185-186), Ahmad criticized *Orientalism* for attacking Orientalists’ ‘misrepresentation’ of reality when Foucault (1973) challenged the very existence of an ‘objective’ reality. When discussing reality and representation, Al-Azm (2000) denounced Said’s emphasis on the importance of representation over reality accusing him of generating an ‘Orientalism in Reverse’ discourse that essentializes ‘the West’ and contributes to the East’s argument of cultural protectionism.

Other scholars raised methodological concerns about Said’s work. For Ahmad (1994) and Turner (1989), Said’s selectivity when analysing Orientalist literature made the orientalist discourse look consistent, and presented it as a monolithic discourse by eliding examples that suggested alternative voices in the discipline. According to Tolz (2011), Said did not recognize the existence of Western scholars who pinpointed the heterogeneity and complexity of Muslim societies from as early as the nineteenth century. Sayyid (2015) argued that these methodological concerns suggest an equally reductionist anti-orientalist discourse, developing an “Occidentalism” doctrine that views ‘the West’ in its discursive dialectic vis-à-vis ‘the Orient’ as monolithic and static.

Despite the above criticism, *Orientalism* remains a useful framework that continues to explain the motifs, mechanisms and functions of representing and negotiating the ‘Other’. The Orientalism paradigm, albeit controversial, cannot be ignored when looking at the representation of Muslims in ‘Western’ media. Its framework stands as a starting point for post-colonialist critiques, particularly when discussing media representation and its relation to power dynamics. In his historical and political study of Orientalism, Lockman (2009) highlights Said’s *Orientalism* as a central text in postcolonial theory and postcolonial studies.

Even Said’s fierce opponents in the last decade, such as Varisco (2007) and Irwin (2007) admit that “it is evident (...) that not all Orientalists did write in good faith” (Ibid., p.298). In fact, Irwin’s criticism of *Orientalism* and his claim that it made no changes in the discipline imply that such orientalist representations remain reproduced in the twenty first century which in turn supports Said’s views on Orientalism’s consistency, sustainability and resistance to change.

Several studies defend *Orientalism*’s reliability when analysing discourses. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2002) showcase the dialectic between power dynamics and literary discourse in post-colonial texts dealing with Eurocentric concepts of language and literature. They examine Heidegger’s notion of *Unheimlichkeit* or ‘not-at-homeness’ (1978), one where the uncanny subject can be both familiar and alien at the same time. This can be “experienced not only by the residents of settler colonies but by all people situated at the ambivalent site of interpretation itself” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002, pp.81-82). Although Orientalists interpreted Muslims in ‘the Orient’, *Orientalism* remains a useful framework for the study of the discourse on British Muslims.

As discussed below, previous studies looking at the representation of Muslims in the UK found that newspapers portray them as a distinct group, evoking the *homo-islamicus* image that Rodinson (1987) suggests to be a European’s perception of an essentially different and fixed “Islamic man”. Although the binary conception of ‘the Orient’ and ‘the West’ has been challenged and broken as a result of immigration, Muslims in ‘the West’ continue to be considered culturally as outsiders, as being umbilically tied to their countries of origins and as ‘Oriental’. In the media, they are depicted as part of the fifth column: they are British but they are suspected of being the enemy within and cannot be trusted.



For these reasons, existing media literature analysing the representations of British Muslims have engaged with *Orientalism* as they find Orientalist processes of categorisation, classification, schematisation and reduction in contemporary media representations of Muslims. Muslims in ‘the West’ seem to remain inside the frame of ‘the Orient’, while living in a displaced Orient. Therefore, despite being an old paradigm, *Orientalism* remains a viable framework that critical media studies on the representation of British Muslims consider and revitalize while recognising its promising contemporary applications.

The critical study of media discourse in this research shall therefore consider this power paradigm when looking at representations of this religious minority. My research, however, aims to detach itself from the directive nature of *Orientalism*, considering it as a starting point rather than a rigid guiding path in my research. As the data analysis in this research progresses, I shall follow other scholars who “did not simply swallow Said’s take on Orientalism hook, line and sinker but engaged with it critically, accepting what seemed useful and rejecting, recasting or developing other aspects” (Lockman, 2009, p.263). The selected methodology in this study shall favour this cautious position as suggested in the methodology section below. But before presenting the methodological approach of this study, it is essential to summarize the main findings of studies on mainstream press representations of Muslims in the UK.

## **2.2. Critical media studies**

The interest in the representation of Muslims in British media is not new, with some suggesting the increased reporting of Islam to have started in earnest with the Rushdie Affair back in 1989 (Falkenhayner, 2014), escalating after the 9/11 attack and the ‘War on Terrorism’ it engendered. In the UK, this peaked after the 7/7 London bombings.

The analysis of the depiction of Muslims and Islam in the British mainstream press was subject to numerous studies using a variety of methods and investigating broadsheet and tabloid mainstream press at different timescales. However, the results of these studies tend to reach the same conclusion: there is a systematic ‘problematization’ of Muslims in British mainstream press that construct them as an ideological and physical threat. Studies converge in finding a systematic depiction of British Muslims associating them with terrorist groups, framing them as a cultural threat and portraying them as inherently problematic. This is carried out and sustained through processes of separation, differentiation and negativization.

The strategies first “identify a ‘space’ – which can be social or mental or physical (etc.) – and rhetorically separate it from ‘Our own’ space; second, they explain the workings or composition of this space in contrast to ‘Our own’; and third British broadsheet newspapers place a (negative) social value on both this space and its composition” (Richardson, 2004, pp.231-232). I will deal with these strategies below.

- ‘They’ and ‘Us’

Although British Muslims have been in the UK for over three generations in large numbers, studies show that press coverage of British Muslims place them not as part of (or even a minority in) the society, but rather as a distinct group whose belonging transcends the borders of the UK, detaching them from British society. Constructing British Muslims as a distinct monolithic religious community, rather than identifying them as diverse ethnic and/or linguistic minorities, is contingent on key historical events and the consequent mainstreaming of orientalist processes. A separative discourse is largely detected in the coverage following the Iranian Revolution and the Rushdie Affair, where Muslims are depicted as irrational and unable to incorporate British values such as democracy and freedom of expression which are pitched as constituting a common ‘Britishness’.

The media response to the Rushdie Affair, contrasting British Muslims’ reaction to the freedom of expression and the freedom of opinion, facilitated the emergence and circulation of ‘the Muslim community’ category. Van Dijk demonstrates that the intensive media coverage of the Rushdie Affair, as “the major panic of 1989” (1991, p.88), was marked by the reference to British Muslims as a distinct, separate and threatening community in the definition and description of this event (Ibid, p.57). As discussed below, it is in this context (and in response to it) that *the Muslim News* was founded as the first newspaper aiming to ‘represent’ the voices of British Muslims. The establishment of *the Muslim News* to ‘represent’ and cater to all Muslims across the UK validated this monolithic categorization. As the analysis of the predominance of the concordance *Muslim community* in Chapter Two shows, *the Muslim News* plays a performative role in constituting and consolidating British Muslims as a religious group rather than highlighting their distinctive ethnicities (e.g. Pakistanis, Arabs...).

This historically contingent categorization of British Muslims persisted in the following decades. Poole finds that press coverage in the 1990s suggests that “Muslims outside Britain were dictating the agenda for Muslims in Britain [and] that Muslim (foreign) values were impinging on British society” (2002, p.79). This resonates with the findings of Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery who suggest a systematic collectivisation of Muslims with words such as *community* and *world* appearing the most in news about British Muslims, especially between 2001 and 2004 (2013, p.115).

The distinct separateness of Muslims in the UK is further depicted in the coverage of Islam as part of foreign and world news emphasizing the idea of ‘non-belonging’. Although the reference to Muslims gradually became localised and contextualised in recent years, newspapers’ representation frames remained restricted to topics of difference which bound a ‘Muslimness’ as an outside ‘Other’.

- ‘They’ are different from ‘Us’

The discourse on British Muslims seems to constantly highlight cultural and religious differences in a secular society that has, among some, little tolerance for faith, especially Islam. This discourse tends to draw a homogeneous British Muslim community, overriding cultural, socio-economic, intergenerational, linguistic and individual differences. In reality, “there is no such thing as a single “Muslim” community in the UK, any more than there is a single “Jewish” or “Christian” one” (Halliday, 2006, p.31).

This ‘imagined’ (Anderson, 2006) homogenous British Muslim community the press helps create and circulate is portrayed as sensitive to offense, separate from the rest of Britain and culturally incompatible (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, pp.127-128).

- ‘They’ are a threat to ‘Us’

The depiction of Islam as deviant from British values closely connects to another frame of representation, which seems to be the most predominant, consistent and recurrent: the portrayal of British Muslims as a physical and ideological threat. “Intolerant of their integration into British society, Muslims are considered a threat to an essential Englishness” (Abbas, 2001, p.254). This is circulated through the omnipresence of themes of conflict, terrorism and fundamentalism in the discourse on British Muslims. Research on mainstream press reveals that the word *terror* has a more frequent appearance than the word *Islam* in press reporting on the latter (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.49).

In the coverage of Islam in twenty mainstream newspapers, conflict emerged by far as the most salient topic with words such as *war* and *militant* appearing three times more than the word *Muslim*. This is significantly striking when compared to the journalistic coverage of conflict in general as there is 34% more coverage of conflict in articles on Islam than in the newspapers' general content (Ibid., p.64).

The discourse on Muslims as violent extremists is further reinforced in the frames of representation and newsworthy topics where they are depicted. News on Muslims tend to cover problematic topics of criminal activity, fundamentalism, extremism, terrorism and violence. Even when reporting on Muslim political voices and elites, "political activism was mainly represented as fundamentalism, an indication of the sort of extremist politics in which Muslims are shown to be involved" (Poole, 2002, p.73). Other studies suggest an emphasis in the British press on the terrorism, danger and extremism that Islam supposedly presents and represents in the UK (Lewis, Mason and Moore, 2011).

### **2.3. Alternative discourses**

In light of the findings of previous studies, it is possible to conclude that the press representation of Muslims in the UK has been negative, problematizing them as a separate and dangerous group. This said, a few differences between broadsheets and tabloids were detected where broadsheet newspapers tend to contextualize events and provide deeper analysis than the tabloids. Other differences exist between left-leaning papers and right-leaning papers: left-leaning broadsheets (and even tabloids) seem to be more nuanced, defending, at times, Muslims' rights as a minority. "When it comes to reporting on Islam and Muslims, the British press is not monolithic. Instead, it embraces a range of concerns and stances, with different newspapers (...) attempting to present stories about Islam filtered through their particular ideological position (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.92). The efforts of left-leaning press – particularly broadsheets such as *The Guardian* and *The Independent* in perpetuating alternative frames of representations remain, however, inconsistent and minimal (Ibid.).

Other exceptional patterns were analysed diachronically: The coverage on Muslims has become more informed over the years, as British Muslims voices (in political and social arenas) are opposing these representations. One example is the switch from using the word

*Moslem* to *Muslim* after the Muslim Council of Britain requested dropping the *Moslem* derogatory spelling (Ibid., p.78).

Indeed, Muslims in the UK have been denouncing and challenging the mainstream media discourse that distorts their reality and amplifies stories about terrorism and conflict when portraying them. Said stresses that unveiling the interests guiding Orientalists is not to suggest that Orientalism does not correspond to a reality. As “a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the west, which elided the Orient’s difference with its weakness” (Said, 1978, p.204), Orientalism was possible because ‘the Orient’ can be orientalized without resisting or challenging the imperial discourse of Orientalism. The absence of the Orient’s own voice in defining itself, representing itself and evaluating itself facilitated the indoctrination of Orientalism. For several decades, the Orient’s political, academic and cultural institutions failed to build an alternative counterweighting discourse proposing a model of self-expression.

Yet, even when British Muslim voices denounce how the mainstream press depicts them (Ahmad, 2006), little attention is given to these voices. While studies show that Muslims consider their portrayal in mainstream press an important factor in the discrimination they face (Ameli, 2007), media discourse studies have yet to explore the discourse of Muslim press in the UK and the way it reports on Muslims. The lack of such research on Muslims, as actors (reporters rather than reported) outside the mainstream representation in the ‘Western’ media, is in itself reflective of Orientalist practices. Dreher suggests that the lack of research interest in Muslim media is tied to the political powers within the media industry; “conventions, institutions and privileges which shape who and what can be heard in media” (Dreher, 2010, p.85). Unlike minority voices, opinions in mainstream media are amplified by academic research, contributing to the ‘invisibility’ of Muslim media. In spite of Muslim media “speaking up”, they are “not listened to” (Ibid.). The marginalization of Muslim voices extends beyond their difficulty to attract a public audience in the competitive media industry. It can also be seen in their lack of recognition within academia. Hence, my research proposes to ‘listen to’ Muslims’ self-representation as observed in *the Muslim News* newspaper, one of main media platforms created by Muslims for Muslims in the UK.

### **3. Muslims' media in the UK**

#### **3.1. Overview of the landscape**

Between the late 19th and early 20th century, publications by Muslims in Britain started to appear such as the publications of the Liverpool Muslim community (part of the Quilliam collection of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester). In 1893, a weekly publication, *Islamic World*, was issued by the Liverpool Muslim Institute and continued until 1908. *Q News* was another British newspaper that addressed Muslims as its main readership between 1992 to 2011 (on a weekly, then a monthly basis). Besides *the Muslim News* (1989 until present), no other printed newspaper by Muslims for Muslims has been consistently present in the UK. As with other minority media, Muslims' media institutions operate in a competitive market, with smaller resources and readership than mainstream ones. *Emel Magazine*, a Muslim life-style publication that was successful in accessing British mainstream media market (being sold in supermarkets and book stores) only lasted for a decade (2003-2013). Other media institutions faced censorship and scrutiny. The Birmingham-based news agency, *Al Ansaar*, had its website closed down by internet service providers and was regularly investigated for its exclusive publication of Bin Laden's videos. Other media, such as TV and radio (e.g. *Radio Ummah*, *Radio Ramadan*), also played a role in disseminating news for Muslims. Muslim TV *Ahmadiyya* was the first TV channel (established in 1992) to address Muslims' interest and concerns in the UK.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, online websites became an important platform to disseminate news to British Muslims and reflect their experiences and views. Websites such as [www.IslamOnline.net](http://www.IslamOnline.net) and [www.mpacuk.org](http://www.mpacuk.org) became increasingly popular amongst young British Muslims. With new media technologies, the number, content and types of Muslims' media productions in the UK have continued to evolve to cater to a growing diverse population. Ahmed notes that British Muslims turn to alternative media to express their identities and that "Muslim media became an important means by which information was obtained and ideas developed" (2005, p.110).

The multiplication of media owned, produced and consumed by Muslims in the UK in the last few decades indicates an increased interest in expressing diverse Muslim voices. Ahmed finds the main reason behind Muslims' appetite for 'Muslim' media is their interest to read about Muslims' current affairs (international and national) in platforms that reflect their concerns and interests (Ibid.). For the last three decades, Muslim media have been occupying

space in providing information, news and opinions to British Muslims. As Gilliat-Ray notes “the opinions that Muslims have about a range of contemporary issues are likely to be shaped in part by media such as the Muslim News, the Muslim Weekly and the Islam Channel, or visits to websites” (2010, p.236).

Besides media channels and platforms based in the UK that cater to British Muslims in English and other languages (such as Urdu and Arabic), several trans-border media based in other countries, such as *Al-Jazeera English* (based in Qatar), have become popular sources of news for Muslims in the UK. Miladi (2006) shows that Arabic-speaking viewers in the UK preferred to watch *Al-Jazeera* over *BBC* for the coverage of 9/11 and the war on Iraq, as they deemed the latter biased against Muslims. With the launch of *Al-Jazeera English* in 2006 and its global prominence hence after, non-Arabic speaking Muslims in the UK have been targeted by a multitude of competitive media organizations beyond those based in the UK. While the multitude and diversity of media produced by Muslims (and consumed by Muslims in the UK) widens the definition of Muslim media, it is important to note that the interest of this thesis is in Muslim media (precisely press) based in the UK, with a focus on a specific newspaper catering to Muslims (*the Muslim News*).

Studies on Muslims’ online presence and expressions have been prolific (Elmasry, 2013; El-Nawawy and Khamis, 2009; Siapera, 2007 amongst others). With online data being generally more accessible than offline data, academic curiosity has not sufficiently extended to Muslims newspapers and magazines. Only one study exploring a small amount of data from British Muslims newspapers and magazines has been conducted to date. Moll examined the discourse of Muslim identity in *Emel* and *Q-News* through a content analysis of 12 issues (in 2007) from each magazine. The study detects the construction of an identity “that simultaneously redefines conceptions of the West and Islam, all the while embracing both” (Moll, 2007). Another study, which shied away from engaging with texts, scanned the landscape of British and French Muslim media with questions on inclusion, equality and citizenship pinpointing the potential of these media in mobilizing Muslims (Rigoni, 2005). Finally, a social psychology study looked at a few issues from *Trends*, *Q-News* and *the Muslim News* between the years 1996 to 1998, to complement its data from interviews with Muslim activists, exploring British Muslims’ ‘transnational’ (i.e. belonging to an Ummah) and national identities.

In the presence of multiple studies on mainstream representations of Muslims, the scarcity of research on Muslims' self-representation leads to an absence of their voices in academic debates. Research on mainstream media has preceded the recent interest in minority media. The term minority media itself has been contested with some limiting it to indigenous and immigrants' media (Riggins, 1992) and others focusing on citizens media (Rodriguez, 2001). In this study, *the Muslim News* is considered a minority newspaper rather than an ethnic or religious newspaper. While ethnic newspapers cater to a specific ethnicity, *the Muslim News* defines itself as a publication that caters to diverse Muslim ethnic minorities. Furthermore, unlike religious publication where texts are limited to religious topics, *the Muslim News* presents itself as an alternative newspaper that covers international, national and local news, along with other topics beyond religion (e.g. sport, matrimonial).

### 3.2. *The Muslim News*

Established in 1989, *the Muslim News* (*the MN*) is the oldest most enduring English-language Muslim newspaper in the UK. It is a print and digital monthly newspaper targeting Muslims across the UK. It describes itself as "the only independent monthly Muslim newspaper in the UK (...) neither backed by any country, organisation nor any party" (The Muslim News, n.d.). It circulates around 140 000 copies, distributing many of them in mosques and Islamic centres and runs an online website containing the newspaper's printed content, receiving 1.5 million hits per month (Ibid.). Other newspapers addressing Muslims, such as the *Muslim Weekly*, appeared after 2001 and have had less circulation than *the MN*. As the oldest newspaper for Muslims with the largest circulation in the UK, *the MN* is selected in this research as an archetype of Muslim press. The newspaper is considered "one of the most significant channels for the dissemination of news reflecting British Muslim interests" (Gilliat-Ray, 2010, p.237). Unlike other newspapers that focus either on international news such as *Crescent International* or *Impact International*, or home news such as *Q-News*, *the MN* combines international and home news. The newspaper contains different constant sections besides its **Home News** and **International News** (the latter sometimes entitled **European News**, **Islamic News**, **Foreign News** and **World News** across the years), such as **Top Stories**, **News in Brief**, **Matrimonial**, **Letters** (from readers) and, inevitably, the **Editorial**. Other sections are seasonal (e.g. **Elections News**, **Ramadan**) or only appear consistently in later years (e.g. **Comment**, **Sport**). With its diverse content, *the MN* caters to the general British Muslim population, beyond ethnicity, age and location.



However, being largely distributed in mosques and Islamic centres, the newspaper targets devout Muslims who frequently visit these venues for prayers and other cultural and community activities. As such, while the newspaper contains several news topics beyond religion, it has a vested interest in tailoring its content to devout Muslims as its primary readership. Indeed, the interest in religious devoutness emerges in several articles including those in sections less related to religion, such as **Sport**, as discussed in Chapter Four.

Although the newspaper is distributed across the UK, its highest readership is based in London (54580 copies) and Lancashire where it distributes 13600 copies (The Muslim News, n.d.). Reaching Muslims from different groups and reporting on topics beyond Islam and religion, *the MN* is neither an ethnic nor a religious newspaper. Instead, it can be described as a minority newspaper, catering to a (religious) minority group.

*The MN* presents itself as an independent newspaper that relies on advertising and sales rather than political sponsorship. It prides itself for being “the most consulted paper in the UK on Muslim domestic & international issues by various media, institutions, academics and researchers – both Muslim and non-Muslim” (Ibid.). It was founded by Ahmed Versi, its monthly editor, in February 1989 shortly after the publication of *The Satanic Verses* and the consequent hostile representations of Islam and Muslims in mainstream press with the Rushdie Affair. The Rushdie Affair brought into relief the absence of Muslim voices in mainstream press and the need for Muslims to express their distinctive views and opinions in media. As such, *the MN* was established at a time when there was a great need for a platform for British Muslims to express their views, campaign and lobby about the issues that matter to them. It has since contributed to the representation of British Muslims’ experiences as shall be explored in the next chapters.

My analysis shall consider self-representation in *the MN* and investigate ways in which it echoes or differs from the mainstream press. Research on Muslim newspapers in countries where they represent a minority, such as India, suggests that news about Muslims was mostly international, fostering their readers’ belonging to an Ummah (Nayyar, 2011). The analysis shall examine potential alternative discourses offered by this newspaper. It shall comparatively explore how *the MN* represents Muslims – whether its representations constitute a reproduction of mainstream media discourse, and/or present an alternative or counter-discourse. The selected methodology for my research facilitates this investigation while mitigating biases.

## 4. Methodology

This section introduces the methodology followed in my PhD research. It starts with a presentation of the cognitive and methodological biases that can affect linguistic analysis. A thorough description of the methods and analytical tools used is then provided, along with an account of the methodological limitations and challenges that these methods present.

### 4.1. Cognitive and methodological biases

Cognitive biases can favour ‘subjective’ analysis of data. In order to mitigate such risks, I shall identify these biases.

The selective perception bias is a cognitive bias that can interfere in one’s perception of the world, reducing realities to what one selectively perceives. Coupled with the observer-expectancy effect or the researcher’s confirmation bias, researchers might tend to select, manipulate or interpret data in a way that favours reaching the findings they expected.

When looking at media representations, the newsworthiness of ‘bad’ news can nurture the negativity bias (Baumeister et al., 2001), a cognitive bias that pushes the analyst to focus on negative representations in the dataset and to give little attention to positive ones.

Other biases are related to the researcher’s cultural constructs. When reading existing analyses of Muslim representations in the media, I came across revealed frames of representation that newspapers convey and that I have incorporated in my own perception of Muslims. Being a Muslim does not immunize me from biased representations about Muslims. In fact, it can make me more vulnerable to the in-group bias, by which one tends to “evaluate one’s own membership group (the in-group) or its members more favourably than a non-membership group (the out-group) or its members” (Hewstone, Rubin and Willis, 2002, p.575). It is therefore important to gain awareness of the researcher’s positionality to minimize the unwarranted skewing of the data when processing it and analysing it. The researcher’s positionality deriving from his or her social location and identity can have “an epistemically significant impact on that speaker’s [or researcher’s] claims and can serve either to authorize or disauthorize one’s speech” (Alcoff, 1991, p.7).

Identifying these biases is not sufficient. It is essential to follow a methodology that permits monitoring biases and mitigating them, if not avoiding them. The selected methodology also allows the relative openness and breadth of the research questions: What does *the MN* talk

about? And how are Muslims represented in *the MN*, in comparison to mainstream press? Hence, the plurality and diversity of analytical methods should favour a ‘relative objectivity’ and offer different approaches in the analysis as outlined below.

#### **4.2. Analytical methods**

A variety of methods were employed in previous research on media representations of Muslims. The selection of methods depends primarily on the type of the analysed data (press, radio, broadcast and social media). Several methods were followed in published literature analysing press data covering Islam: some combined Content Analysis and Multimodal Analysis (Lewis, Mason and Moore, 2011), Content Analysis and CDA (Poole, 2002), or Corpus Analysis and CDA (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013). Combining numerous methods favours a revision of findings to assess the rigour and validity of the analysis. This PhD research proposes a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative analysis to attenuate biases, deepen the analysis and enforce its validity and replicability. I shall therefore combine Corpus Analysis tools with CDA: the former both facilitating the attenuation of biases in the analysis and permitting the replication of my research, and the latter allowing an in-depth insightful analysis taking into consideration both the convergence and divergence that might emerge from Corpus Analysis.

In analysing my data, I shall refer to other corpora, called reference corpora, to compare my findings and attribute meanings to them. For example, the importance of the frequency of the word *Muslim* in a corpus of minority press can be assessed by comparing this frequency to the number of times the word occurs in a corpus of mainstream newspapers. In the following section, the reference corpora are introduced along with a detailed description of the methods used in their analysis: Corpus Analysis and CDA. In the presentation of these methods, I shall describe the process used in their application to data (e.g. building the corpus and annotating it), indicate the analytical tools that are employed in exploring the data (e.g. collocation, legitimation) and show their utility when answering the main research questions and suggesting further areas of investigation in the research. The analytical tools allow the analysis to be data-driven: the analysis departs from general research questions and remains guided by the data, permitting the emerging findings to direct the formulation of further questions. The new questions derived from the quantitative analysis shall allow for a more in-depth investigation with the use of CDA.

#### **4.2.1. The reference corpora**

A reference corpus is a built-in corpus containing a large set of data (millions of words) that is usually shared in corpus softwares and used in comparison to findings emerging from new corpora that share similar sampling frames. The sampling frame presents the sampling decision upon which the selection and design of the data are made. The frame specifies the type of data (e.g. administrative documents, academic articles, newspaper editorials etc...) and their source (e.g. national archives, academic journals, broadsheet and tabloid newspapers etc...). In addition to this, the sampling frame sets the distribution of the data over time clarifying the timeline considered in the data collection. The reference corpora of this study are presented below and further described in Chapter Two when used to analyse *the MN*.

##### **a. Islam-UK Corpus**

As my research provides a comparison of the portrayal of Muslims between a Muslim newspaper and mainstream press, the reference to a built-in corpus for mainstream press is useful in developing and answering research questions. The reference corpus for this research, Islam-UK, is the corpus built in the study of Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013) which contained 143 million words collected from 200,000 newspapers articles over the period of twelve years (1998-2009). This corpus provides a reliable representation of the coverage of Muslims in British mainstream press as it includes twenty popular left-leaning and right-leaning tabloids and broadsheet papers in the UK. Islam-UK was used to carry a synchronic comparison between the newspapers (broadsheets and tabloids, left-leaning and right-leaning) and a diachronic one over the years covered in the corpus. Due to copyright issues outlined below, access to Islam-UK Corpus could not be granted. Other reference corpora were therefore resorted to as described below.

##### **b. The British National Corpus**

A useful built-in corpus, the British National Corpus (BNC) is the main reference corpus used in Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study (2013). This corpus contains 100 million words of written and spoken language representing British English. The reference to this corpus is applied in the discursive analysis of utterances that can be loaded with unexposed meanings. For example, the verb *to cause* can be understood as referring to the action of

triggering or producing a result, without necessarily connoting negative or positive effects. However, a closer look at the common use of this verb in the BNC written and spoken corpus (as well as at the words that frequently occur with it) expose a loaded negative connotation of this verb as it tends to appear with diseases and natural disasters. Evaluative meanings are not solely inscribed in single words but can also emerge from the combination (or collocation) of two words. Investigating connotation carried by collocations shall be guided by Corpus Analysis to control the interference of the researcher's biases. Relying on the BNC, an old corpus that has been completed in 1994 before the timeframe under study (1998-2009), is insufficient. More recent reference corpora were therefore considered.

### **c. The New Model Corpus**

In response to the BNC becoming outdated (with regards to the language it contains and its design model), the New Model Corpus (NMC) was built in 2008 with 100 million words collected from the web. About 7 million of these words are retrieved from newspapers websites. Other text sources in this corpus include domain specific websites (such as medical and legal websites) as well as blogs. The NMC, built over a decade after the BNC, is meant to be more representative of the English language circulating online.

### **d. ukWaC**

A larger corpus including 2 billion words, ukWaC is also derived from the web. The corpus is freely available, and tagged, in the software analysis programme used in my study. It was built in 2007 using mid-frequency words from the BNC as seed words. Unlike the NMC, it limits its source to websites in the .uk domain. Considering more than one reference corpus allows the comparison of data across several corpora as I shall endeavour to show in Chapter Two.

### **e. The SiBol/Port (Siena-Bologna, Portsmouth) corpus**

This corpus is composed of English broadsheet newspapers (787000 articles). Nevertheless, the timeframe of this data is different than mine – the SiBol/Port articles are limited to the years 1993, 2005 and 2010. The articles are retrieved from mainstream right leaning and left leaning newspapers including *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Telegraph*. Being a corpus solely derived from newspapers content, SiBol/Port would be useful in the comparison of *the MN* data to data from mainstream press. These comparisons are facilitated by Corpus Analysis.

#### 4.2.2. Corpus Analysis

As a computerized method for linguistic analysis, Corpus Analysis is a reliable quantitative tool that enables statistical analysis of linguistic data and ensures a corpus-driven perspective, allowing unexpected results to emerge, and quantifying expected findings by allocating impartial significance to them. I shall therefore use Corpus Analysis tools to facilitate the attenuation of biases in the analysis and to enable the replication of my research.

As Harris states, Corpus Analysis starts “with a large collection of recorded utterances from some language, a corpus”. The corpus is then “subjected to a clear, stepwise, bottom-up strategy of analysis” (1993, p.27). Corpus Analysis is an analytical method that applies to big corpora of hundreds of thousands of words and usually millions of words. These words are first collected, annotated and then analysed.

##### a. Collecting the data and building the corpus

Some built-in corpora of newspapers and magazines such as the Reuters Corpora and the TIME Magazine Corpus are available and accessible online, or in corpus software programmes which are used for analysis (also called concordancers). To build a new corpus of newspapers content, researchers tend to retrieve data from newspapers databases that facilitate the collection and storage of large corpora into the analysis software. These databases, such as Factiva or LexisNexis usually aggregate mainstream press and contain little or no data from minority press. Even large databases of UK newspapers that include local press such as Newsbank have not aggregated data from *the MN* so far.

Therefore, I systematically built my own corpus of *the MN* by directly collecting data from *the MN* website. Luckily, the newspaper allows access to their archives for the investigated time period from 1998 to 2009. This permits the collection of all content published in the printed issues during this timeframe, except eight issues that are not available, as presented below.

The collection, storage and uploading of data into the software analysis programme was conducted manually. An experimentation with web crawlers or web scrappers which operate with computer languages to automatically collect and organize the data was not successful. Web crawlers and web scrappers are software programmes that extract data from the web

mechanically. They operate with computer languages which need to be adapted to the different interfaces of websites. The most suitable programming language for the purpose of this research is R. R is a software language that allows tailoring and emitting computer commands which would automatically and systematically collect large sets of data from online interfaces. Several errors occurred throughout the process of adapting these web crawlers to *the MN* website using R language. This failure in using automatic collection and storage of the data resulted in its manual collection.

The collected data includes all texts published in *the MN* (e.g. news articles, editorials, columns, letters) across all sections (**Top stories**, **Home News** etc...) in all *the MN* monthly issues from 1998 to 2009. It is digitally retrieved from the online archives of the newspaper. The data comprises all headlines, sub-headlines (if any), lead paragraphs and the consecutive paragraphs. This, however, excludes less significant (shorter) texts that appear in the newspaper such as captions of photos, advertisements and crosswords. As such, the data retrieved is mainly found in news articles (international, national, local), opinion columns, editorials, feature stories, letters to the newspaper, matrimonials, obituaries, reviews and news briefs among others. A total of 4773 texts were compiled in a corpus containing 2,906,610 words, and 3,354,517 tokens. Tokens stand for the number of instances in which the nearly 3 million words appear. These tokens form 115,493 sentences in the corpus.

The overall number of articles per year increased as shown in Table 1. This was accompanied by an annual increase in the number of sections and articles per section in the newspaper. The increase in the number of articles per year suggests a diachronic development in the newspaper coverage of issues pertaining to Muslims. It is important to note that some issues were not available to be included in the corpus. These are the six monthly issues between June and November 1998 (consecutively numbered as 110, 111, 112, 113, 114 and 115) and the two monthly issues of April and May 2000 (132 and 133).

Table 1: Number of texts per year in *the MN*

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of texts	131	359	298	319	338	340	364	448	526	531	551	568

The texts available in *the MN* archives are divided into the newspaper sections (**Editorial**, **Home News**, **Columns** etc...). It is important to note that these sections vary throughout the time period as some are dropped out and others are added. For instance, in 1998, the newspaper included the following sections: **Editorial**, **Home News**, **European** or **International News**, **Specials** (e.g. **Ramadan**, **Education**) and **Regular Columns**. From July 2000, a new section including letters from readers was introduced in the newspaper (**Letters**). The inclusion of readers' views and opinions is further enhanced from the November 2005 issue when a **Comment** section was added.

These changes cause a difficulty comparing different sections of the same newspaper when analysing discourse patterns over time. Baker identifies this as the diachronic sampling dilemma: "the dilemma is whether we try to minimise interference from other factors by using the same sampling model for all the time periods we wish to compare, or aim to give a fully representative account of language use at each given point, which may involve changing the sampling model" (2010, p.6). For this reason, it is important to note that while all the data contained in the newspaper's issues from 1998 to 2009 are collected and analysed, the comparative analysis will only look diachronically at the newspaper's discursive patterns emerging from the analysis of all the data, rather than making an analysis of (or between) specific sections, unless otherwise stated. Throughout the study, some findings were tested by analysing data from specific sections such as **Editorial** and **Letters** to address emerging questions in the research.

All the texts throughout the different sections are collected, including articles that are not 'about' Muslims: articles published in *the MN* where there is no explicit terminology referring to Muslims are also included in the corpus. Considering the readership of *the MN*, articles that are not about Muslims in this newspaper are also relevant to this study as they are considered newsworthy for British Muslims and are being circulated to them.

#### **b. Annotating the corpus**

Once the corpus is scrapped, it is inserted into a software analysis programme. The concordancer used for the collection and analysis of *the MN* corpus is Sketch Engine. It is a widely-used corpus system that allows access to several built-in corpora and permits the construction of new ones. Three types of annotation are necessary after the construction of the corpus: grammatical tagging, semantic annotation and meta-data coding.



- Grammatical tagging

Sketch Engine offers a variety of useful features and provides automatic tagging of the data. Tagging is the process of adding grammatical tags to the words of the corpus to identify them. For example, lemmatization allows the recognition of the lemma of a word and the determination of its lexical category (e.g. verbs, adjectives, nouns etc...). The search for a particular word can then be controlled by looking at its appearance or frequency in particular parts of speech: If the words *Muslim* appears X times in *the MN* corpus, I can identify, for instance, the times when it appears with nouns (e.g. *Muslim men*) or adjectives (e.g. *devout Muslim*).

- Semantic annotation

However, further semantic tagging might be needed after the construction of the corpus. These are tags that allocate meanings to words. For instance, polysemy tagging identifies the different meanings a word can have: for example the word *Mecca* can refer to the Saudi Arabian city and can also mean a holy place or a place visited by many people (e.g. Paris is a *mecca* of tourists) or even refer to a place for gambling in the UK (i.e. Mecca Bingo). The need for manual semantic tagging is assessed after building the corpus as it depends primarily on the data content and the technical challenges it may present at the analysis stage.

- Meta-data coding

Building a corpus requires the performance of a meta-data annotation that records and classifies meta-data about the data in ‘headers’ (Kilgarriff and Kosem, 2012). The meta-data include the source of the data (article, editorial), author of the text, date of its publication, its title and any other added comments. This makes the corpus more instrumental at the stage of analysis: it facilitates, for instance, finding keywords from texts published at a particular year. The meta-data annotation was manually performed on *the MN* corpus. It involved all the above classifications, along with indicating the section in which the text appears (e.g. **Home News**, **International News**, **Top Stories** etc...). As such, the number of texts per section is also accounted for across years. Throughout the analysis, this can be useful in indicating consistencies and/or shifts in *the MN* focus (e.g. in comparing the number of articles in the **Home News** section to the **International News** section).

### c. Analysing the corpus

The analysis of the corpus is carried out by combining and alternating between three key tools in Corpus Linguistics that enable statistical processing of the data: word sketch, keywords and collocates. Another tool that is used when analysing large amount of data is word list.

- Word sketch

Word sketch is a distinctive tool of Sketch Engine. It is an automatically-produced “summary of a word's grammatical and collocational behaviour” in a corpus (Kilgarriff et al., 2014, p.9) helping to “find out what the corpus has to say about a word” (Kilgarriff and Tugwell, 2002, p.136). When there are several hundreds or thousands of instances of a particular word (e.g. *Muslim*), the word sketch tool provides a summary of the most frequent words that tend to appear with it, which are called collocates. It also uses the grammatical taggers to identify the different grammatical relations (gramrels) between the search word and its collocates (e.g. *Muslim* + verb, *Muslim* + noun etc...). In the Islam-UK corpus, five grammatical patterns or frames are identified by the word sketch when exploring the word *Muslim*: {*Muslim* and/or *x*}, {[verb] + *Muslim*} where *Muslim* is the object of a verb, {*Muslim* + [verb]} where *Muslim* is the subject, {[adjective] + *Muslim*} such as *devout Muslim*, and { *Muslim* + [noun]} such as *Muslim preacher*. The word sketch can also order the collocates in these frames according to their frequency. As a result, the researcher can, for instance, compare the frequency of the adjective *devout* in occurring with *Muslim* to that of *radical*.

This tool is used in my study to explore the way Muslims are framed and represented in the corpus, to compare these frames to the mainstream ones. I shall use this tool at the earliest stage of the study to identify, by statistical findings rather than the researcher’s assumptions, the routes to embark on when developing the analysis.

- Word list

A word list is a list of words generated by the concordancer (Sketch Engine) that presents the most frequent words in the corpus in order of their frequency. These frequent words can reveal the most salient topics in the corpus. Although it provides indications of the frequent topics in a corpus, word list shall be complemented with keywords analysis, as explained below.

- Keywords

Keywords are words that have a statistical significance frequency in a corpus A when compared to a corpus B. They allow the identification of the most frequent words in a corpus when compared to a reference corpus. The significance of their ‘unusual’ frequency is calculated in the concordancer through statistical tests such as log-likelihood (Dunning, 1993). Log-likelihood statistically determines the high frequency keywords of a studied corpus when compared to others. This statistical test used in Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study (2013) tests the null hypothesis that two words appear together more than expected, considering their frequency in the corpus and the size of the corpus. Therefore, unlike word lists, the generated list of keywords in a corpus is not presenting the most frequent words in it; it is rather signposting the most ‘unusually frequent’ words in that corpus compared to another one. This allows identifying the specific ‘aboutness’ of a corpus.

This is a powerful analytical tool that draws the researcher’s attention to words that are not expected to appear in the corpus. It eliminates grammatical words that are ‘usually frequent’ in all corpora, such as articles and pronouns, and sheds the light on content words that reveal the distinctive topics covered by a newspaper. The statistical tests take into consideration the size of the corpus when producing the keywords list indicating the probability when the differences between the frequencies of words in a corpus A and a corpus B are due to chance.

When analysing keywords, the study will look at the sameness and/or difference of keyword lists of *the MN* compared to those observed in mainstream press. Further, a diachronic analysis of keywords within *the MN* considers the distribution of the keywords among all texts over the timeframe in order to look at the consistencies and changes in topics covered by the newspaper.

- Collocates

When exploring a word in the corpus, not only does the concordancer provide information on the word’s frequency and ‘keyness’ (i.e. its unusual frequency); it can also present all the instances when that word appears in the corpus. These results (or hits) are called concordances.

Collocation is the tendency of a word to occur with another. This is observed in the repetitive occurrence of a word near another. A collocation is “statistically determined, and refers to the

co-occurrence of two words within a pre-specified span, when the frequency of the co-occurrence is above chance, taking into account the frequencies of the *node* (the word in focus), its collocates, and the collocation itself” (Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008, p.11). The boundaries defining the nearness between the two words are set by the researcher when examining the concordances. Generally, corpus linguists consider the span of 10 words, looking at the five words preceding the search word and the five words following it. This +/-5 span suggests a visual and a semantic perception of the nearness of the two words. The 5 words span was considered in Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study (2013) and shall be followed in the present one.

The collocates tool enables finding the words that most frequently collocate with a search word (e.g. *Muslim*). However, looking at the frequent tendency of a certain word to appear with another is not sufficient in interpreting the data as grammatical words tend to be the ones that collocate the most with content words. Statistical measures such as the Mutual Information Value (MIV) are therefore used to determine the collocates that are closely associated taking into account their respective frequencies, the calculation of their statistically expected near occurrence considering their frequencies and the difference between that calculation and their actual proximate occurrence. These tests indicate the strength of a collocation between two words demonstrating the conditionality of the occurrence of a word when another appears.

In looking at the representation of Muslims, collocates will be used to find the verbs, adjectives and nouns that tend to collocate the most with words such as *Muslim*. The findings are further explored with Critical Discourse Analysis.

#### **4.2.3. Critical Discourse Analysis**

##### **a. From Corpus Analysis to Critical Discourse Analysis**

Corpus Analysis is efficient in pointing to areas of interest and deeper investigation as it indicates the consistencies, changes and unusualness of the discourse. Nevertheless, while quantitative analysis can reveal saliences, draw tendencies and suggest patterns in the representation, relying solely on it cannot bring meaning to the findings and risks reducing the discourse to mute data. I shall therefore complement Corpus Analysis with a thorough discourse analysis following what statistical findings present. The selection of articles and sections subject to CDA aspires to grasp texts that embody the general style suggested by Corpus Analysis as well as other texts that show singularity or uniqueness. The aim is to

conduct an in-depth analysis by taking into consideration both the convergence and divergence that might emerge from the corpus. Alternating between Corpus Analysis and CDA, the research will aim at empirical description with in-depth analysis through interpretation and explanation.

### **b. Critical Discourse Analysis approach**

The popularity of CDA is a result of its powerful function as a transdisciplinary methodology uncovering ideologies in texts and examining the dialectic relations between power and discourse (Fairclough, 2010, p.4). It is an analytical approach that examines texts in societies and explores the relations between text and power dynamics. “Any part of any text (from the media or from elsewhere) will be simultaneously representing, setting up identities and setting up relations” (Fairclough, 1995, p.5). These representations can serve relations of power and domination and convey ideological messages. However, CDA has been criticized for its selectivity and biased accounts. Widdowson (2004, p.102) notes that in CDA, the desired result shapes the analysis, and the agenda of the researcher can interfere in the analysis.

For this reason, it is important to note that CDA will be largely guided by the Corpus Analysis results following a corpus-driven approach. It aims to extend the analysis by giving meanings to the statistical outcomes and directing the investigation of further findings sustained by the corpus. This circularity of the methodology shall not present risks of infinity in the analysis considering the limited size of *the MN* corpus.

It is essential to use CDA with Corpus Analysis to avoid over-interpreting or under-interpreting results. CDA requires a closer look at the concordances, expanding them over the +/-5 span, and/or analysing the whole paragraph or article. The following analytical techniques can be defined prior to the analysis. However, the utility of these CDA techniques and the introduction of others will depend primarily on the discursive patterns suggested by the application of Corpus Analysis tools. As such, other techniques may be used throughout the analysis and will be described accordingly in the next chapters.

- Legitimation and evaluation

Considering language as a vehicle for legitimation (Weber, 1947, p.325), the analysis shall explore legitimation strategies which present arguments to support representations. This is particularly important when looking at the representation of minority groups as it can

elucidate the journalists' complex ways to justify power relations and representations as a process of normalisation. Van Leeuwen's analytical framework (Van Leeuwen, 2007) is applied to identify legitimisation strategies of *authorization*, *evaluation* and *rationalization*.

Analysing authorisation requires tracking the reference to authority of customs, traditions, laws, people with powerful social or institutional status, experts and role models. Detecting legitimisation in this first category entails, for instance, the identification of obligation modalities (e.g. *must*, *have to*). In the case of experts' authority, the legitimisation may appear in the expression of mental processes (e.g. *Professor X believes...*) as defined in Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).

Analysing the authority of tradition, customs and practices along with moral evaluation is more interesting in this study as it can uncover the distinction or confusion between what is attributed to *Muslims'* customs and what is justified by *Islam*. The reference to *Islam* can be traced to the evocation of Islamic doctrine or practices as a source of a moral evaluation. The moral evaluation uses value-systems to legitimize practices, actions or reactions linking them to *Islam* rather than the individual or collective behaviour of *Muslims*.

The analysis of the authority of tradition and the moral evaluation can reveal patterns of legitimisation where references to *Islam* and/or *Muslims* are used permitting a comparison between represented actions and practices (i.e. which actions are linked to *Islam* or those that are associated with *Muslims*). This is particularly useful in shedding light on the 'aboutness' of the discourse on Muslims in *the MN*. Is it about *Islam* or *Muslims* or both? Are they used interchangeably or is there a clear distinction made between them? The interchangeability of other relevant terms, such as *Islam* and *Islamist/Islamic/Islamism* or *Muslims* and *Islamists* can also be explored.

In texts, evaluation serves different functions including expressing opinions, maintaining relations and organizing the discourse. It conveys "the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about" (Hunston and Thompson, 2000, p.5). When reflecting what people think or feel, evaluative meanings do not only project ideas; they also reveal the value-system of the writer and the ideology behind the text. "Every act of evaluation expresses a communal value-system, and every act of evaluation goes towards building up that value-system. This value-system in turn is a component of the ideology which lies behind every text. Thus, identifying what the writer thinks reveals the ideology of the society that has produced the

text” (Ibid., p.6). Analysing evaluation and legitimation is therefore essential in applying CDA as it formulates answers to the question: How does *the MN* justify its representations?

- Semantic preference and discourse prosody

Semantic preference or prosody is “the relation, not between individual words, but between a lemma or word-form and a set of semantically related words” (Stubbs, 2001a, p.65). Semantic preference is derived from the top frequent collocates of a word. These collocates can create a semantic space in which a word navigates and by which it may be conditioned. For example, the word *glass* tends to collocate in the BNC with words denoting drinkable liquids (e.g. *beer, water, gin, juice*). The analysis of the semantic preference can demonstrate the frames of representation of words such as *Islam* and *Muslim* by looking at their most frequent collocates.

This first layer of analysis is deepened with a second layer using discourse prosody, which expresses the speaker’s attitude. It is “a feature which extends over more than one unit in a linear string” (Stubbs, 2001b, p.306). This concerns words that are loaded with more than their literal meanings, such as the example of the verb *cause* presented above. Verbs that collocate with *Islam* and *Muslim* will be explored to retrieve their semantic preference when analysing agency.

#### **4.3. Methodological limitations**

Although the combination of the descriptive function of Corpus Analysis and the interpretative role of CDA offers to test the analysis and enrich it, it presents some challenges related to copyrights, balance and other methodological limitations.

##### **4.3.1. Copyright issues**

The content of newspapers is subject to copyrights. Aggregating it from databases or from newspapers’ own websites for the purpose of research does not exempt this content from restrictions in sharing it or using it over a long period of time. The Islam-UK is a valuable resource for any study looking at press representations of British Muslims considering its size and inclusiveness of mainstream press. However, the corpus is not available and cannot be accessed as the time allowed for its use has expired.

This presents challenges for my analysis since my comparative approach can only consider the results reported about the analysis of Islam-UK, an analysis that is obtained by particular

statistical tests and derived from a defined approach by the analysts. Additionally, the comparison of my findings to those emerging from the analysis of Islam-UK faces issues of balance and comparability.

#### **4.3.2. Balance and comparability**

A corpus can be deemed balanced when it has enough data to be representative of the language studied. In this case, the corpus containing all the content published in *the MN* from 1998 to 2009 will be assumed to be representative of the discourse of this newspaper during that timeframe, making the analysis more illustrative of its discourses than random sampling.

Hence, the hypotheses or conclusions will be limited to the language of *the MN* in that particular timeframe (12 years) and cannot be generalized for the editorial line of *the MN* since its inception to date (29 years). Discourses constantly change and reproduce which makes their analysis bound to the context and timeframe of their production and dissemination. Further, the findings shall not be taken as representative of the press (or media) discourse of British Muslims, nor can this newspaper be considered as the most important vehicle for messages to and about Muslims in the UK. Along with the different media channels outlined above, the rise of blogging and social media platforms, during that timeframe and after it, triggered a greater interest and consumption of news and views on these spaces.

While the data collection expands on the same timeframe as Islam-UK and the analysis uses the same concordancer and methodology, the sampling frame of *the MN* remains different in that it is not limited to query words to collect the data, as is the case with Islam-UK.

#### **4.3.3. Other methodological limitations**

Newspapers do not exist in a vacuum. They circulate in a world of images where visual representations (i.e. photos, typography and page layouts) are increasingly influencing readers. Photos represent powerful paratexts in conveying representations by making grammatical combinations that advance visual statements (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996). Multimodal analysis can therefore be useful in looking at visual compositions and their meaning potential in an attempt to study how “elements in a visual composition represent people, values or ideas” (Machin, 2007, p.39).

The technical limitations of the selected concordancer prevent the researcher from carrying a systematic analysis of published photos. Nonetheless, the linguistic analysis shall be enriched



by social and cultural elements that explain and extend the linguistic findings for corpora can provide evidence, but not explanations or interpretations.

The analysis is also limited in its timescale: although the 1998-2009 span was selected for comparability purposes, the press interest in British Muslims can be tracked earlier with some arguing that the Rushdie Affair was a critical point in the discourse regarding British Muslims (Abbas, 2001, p.253).

In this chapter, the theoretical framework of this study is outlined, discussing existing literature on press representations of British Muslims and describing the data and methodology. The analytical methods outlined above shall favour corpus driven findings that start by exploring the big picture of what representations circulate in *the MN*, as outlined in the next chapter.

## Chapter Two

### The Big Picture: Playing Muslims in the Media Pitch

In this chapter, I explore the data expansively (spanning all years), extensively (covering all sections) and at the macro-level (observing and comprehending the big picture). I kept the preliminary questions broad when approaching the data in order to minimize bias and to allow the findings to clarify further directions. Two generic questions were considered at first: What is *the MN* about (what topics does it focus on and what is unique about these topics)? And how are Muslims represented?

To answer the first question, I used the word list to indicate the topics that *the MN* frequently covers. While the word list identifies salient topics, it does not demonstrate the significance of their salience. In order to understand the significance of frequent topics, keyness is applied by comparing *the MN* corpus to other corpora. This provides an answer to what is unique about the corpus. The second question on the representation of Muslims is approached with the use of word sketch for the words *Muslim* and *Muslims*.

The findings show the big picture in *the MN* coverage. Within this picture, some elements have a more important presence and role than others. The data contained in titles of texts benefit from a privileged placement and size within the newspaper's page layout that make their presence more important than the rest of the text. Hence, the titles appearing in all texts within *the MN* corpus are also analysed generically in this chapter to look at the topics that *the MN* chooses to highlight.

#### 1. What is the corpus about?

##### 1.1. Word list

The first step in the analysis consists of generating a word list, a list containing the most frequent words in the corpus. Then, the frequent words are grouped by topic to explore the salient topics appearing in *the MN*. In order to do this, the words are examined in context by looking at the concordances in which they appear to determine their meanings even when they seem obvious. For example, the word *West* could be a reference to 'the West' as opposed to, say, 'the East' in cultural or geopolitical terms. An analysis of the concordances

in which it appears shows that it refers more often to *the West Bank* in Palestine and other places (e.g. *West Midlands*, *West Yorkshire*) than to *the West*.

Only 43 words amongst the 100 most frequent words are grouped by topic and presented in the table below. These 43 words are topic indicators – they refer to common topics in *the MN*. The remaining words are either unrelated to the salient topics (that is they refer to various other topics, with no significant number of words falling under a shared topic), or homonyms that, when examined in context, are found to refer to different topics. For example, the word *state* (appearing 1516 times in the corpus) refers to *state* schools in some concordances, and to *state* (as a synonym to country) in others. A few of the most frequent words are also not included as they are commonly used in news reporting and are irrelevant for this analysis (for example *said*, *think*, *day*)<sup>3</sup>.

The most prevailing words in order of salience grouped under common topics are outlined in the following table.

Table 1: Most salient topics in *the MN* corpus

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Topic indicators</b>	<b>Total occurrences of words</b>
Religion	<i>Muslim, Muslims, Islamic, Islam, religious, faith and religion</i>	41400
Collectiveness	<i>people, community, world, communities, groups</i>	18559
Politics	<i>government, Council, political, Minister, Secretary, Labour</i>	13408
UK	<i>British, London, Britain, UK</i>	13325
Countries	<i>US, Israel, Iraq, Israeli, Palestinian, countries, Pakistan</i>	14568
Society	<i>women, children, family, society, young</i>	9800
Law	<i>police, right, law, case, rights</i>	9269
Education	<i>school, schools</i>	4021
Conflict	<i>war, terrorism</i>	3634

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<sup>3</sup> The full list of the most frequent words (including unclassified ones that did not fit into the obtained categories) is provided in appendix A.

The predominance of religion as a topic in *the MN* corpus is not surprising. *The Muslim News* is a newspaper catering to Muslim communities in the UK and it is expected that *Islam*, *religion* and *faith* appear as some of the most frequent words. While *Islamic*, *Islam*, *religious*, *faith* and *religion* can clearly be categorized under Religion, it is more difficult to classify *Muslim* and *Muslims* under the same category. Indeed, these two terms can refer to topics besides Religion, such as minority identity. As such, the salience of the topic Religion could be considered misleading as one of the words grouped in it (and the most frequent one) is *Muslim* which is present in the name of the newspaper “the *Muslim News*”. It is therefore important to look at the frequency of this collocation. Although the collocation between *Muslim* and *News* scores high, the strongest collocate for *Muslim* is *community*. The analysis of the word *Muslim* as an adjective indicates the word *community* as the most important collocate (2237 times), having double frequency in its collocation with the word *Muslim* than the word *News* (1033 times). *Community* is also listed within the most frequent words found in mainstream press as well as the strongest collocate of *Muslim* by Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013). Other nouns that refer to collectiveness, such as *people*, *world* and *group* also appear in their list (Ibid.). In fact, most of the topic indicators found in *the MN* corpus match those listed as the most frequent in mainstream press coverage of Muslims. When extending the concordances of the most salient words in *the MN*, they are found to indicate topics resonating with those found in mainstream press. Previous research shows that collectivizing Muslims with collocates such as *community* and *world* in mainstream press is used to differentiate and separate Muslims as a minority, highlighting a tension between them and Britishness (Ibid.).

This separation is also observed in mainstream press stories covering the topic of education. Education is another frequent topic in *the MN* which Poole (2002) finds in articles on Muslims’ schools represented as a threat to British values. Another commonly salient topic is crimes and law. In Poole’s study, criminality is found to be highlighted when criminal activity within family relationships (such as honour killing) is linked to cultural norms alien to ‘Western’ values and culture. In fact, honour killing is found to be associated with Muslims and Islam in the British press (Chafai, 2013). In contrast to ‘Western’ societies where “violence against women (...) is rarely perceived as a problem of ‘culture’, but rather as a social issue, murders committed in minority communities in the West, or in developing countries, particularly if they are Muslim, are broadly attributed to ‘culture’ rather than to the patriarchal element within the culture” (Pope, 2004, p.101). Honour killing is portrayed in

mainstream press as murders that “are committed by backward people coming of distant cultures, and bear little in common with forms of violence prevalent in the West” (Ibid.).

Besides criminality, collectiveness and education, several predominant topics in mainstream reporting about British Muslims are also found in *the MN*. Society (particularly women) and conflict are also recurrent topics when reporting about Muslims in the UK. The extent of their salience, however, is not the same. Unlike mainstream press where conflict is found to be the most omnipresent (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013), conflict in *the MN* is found to be the least salient amongst frequent topics. When looking at their frequency, words related to conflict were found to appear five times more than words related to religion in a mainstream press corpus collected on the basis of the latter (Ibid., p.62). In contrast, even if considering words related to law in *the MN* as denoting tension, the total frequency of the topic law and conflict combined in *the MN* (12903 words) is less than a third of the frequency of religion (41400 words).

Other topics such as society and education are found to be more salient in *the MN* than in mainstream press reporting on Muslims. In Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study (2013), topics related to religion, culture and society were found to be five times less frequent than conflict. In fact, in mainstream press, conflict, as a single category, has a higher frequency than all other categories combined (Ibid., p.56). This resonates with other mainstream press studies where terrorism was found to dominate a third of the stories on Muslims (Lewis, Mason and Moore, 2011, p.44) and where a focus on violence and conflict is observed in press representations of British Muslims (Richardson, 2004).

In mainstream press, one particular word that was found to refer predominantly to terrorism and conflict, rather than religion, is *Islamic*. It is rarely found to refer to religion in mainstream press, “tends to hold a negative discourse prosody of extremism” (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.45), and is mainly connected to conflict, terrorism and violence (Ibid., p.84).

It is therefore striking to note the high frequency of this word, heavily charged with negativity by mainstream press, in *the MN* corpus. The classification of *Islamic* under religion, rather than conflict, significantly increases the salience of the former topic over the latter, due to the word’s high frequency. In fact, *Islamic* is more frequent than the word *Islam* in *the MN* corpus. *Islamic* is also one of the most important key words in the corpus when comparing *the MN* corpus to four different reference corpora as demonstrated further below.

When analysing mainstream press, Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013, pp.153-154) find that *Islamic* tends to collocate with groups or concepts referring to extremism and danger such as *militant*, *fundamentalist* and *radical*. They also find a tendency in these collocates to refer to organised groups that are military, extreme and illegal, to states<sup>4</sup> and to political entities such as parties. However, in *the MN*, none of the collocates that *Islamic* modifies (4260 instances) refer to extremism or violence. Only one of the frequent collocates, *Jihad*, appears in a context of conflict, referring to the Palestinian Islamic Jihad organisation and Hamas. In most cases, however, *Islamic* appears as a modifier of nouns related to organisations such as *Islamic Relief*, *Islamic Society of Britain*, *Islamic Foundation* and fields of study such as *Islamic Studies*, *Islamic Law*, *Islamic finance*, *Islamic history* and *Islamic Art*.

Table 2: Top collocates of *Islamic*

Collocation	Score
<i>Relief (Islamic Relief)</i>	11.67
<i>Centre (Islamic Centre)</i>	11.12
<i>Society (the Islamic Society)</i>	10.55
<i>Studies (Centre for Islamic Studies)</i>	10.16
<i>Foundation (the Islamic Foundation)</i>	10.00
<i>history (of Islamic history)</i>	9.85
<i>Societies (Federation of Student Islamic Societies FOSIS)</i>	9.68
<i>finance (Islamic finance)</i>	9.58
<i>scholar (Islamic scholars)</i>	9.47
<i>Law<sup>5</sup> (Islamic Law)</i>	9.39
<i>art (of Islamic art)</i>	9.31
<i>world (in the Islamic world)</i>	9.29
<i>Conference (of the Islamic Conference OIC)</i>	9.28
<i>centre (Islamic centres)</i>	9.21

<sup>4</sup> The Islamic State (ISIS or Daesh), even though emerging as the *Islamic State* of Iraq within the studied timeframe (from 2006), only gained considerable media attention in recent years. Such collections (*Islamic state* of Iraq), that would place “*Islamic*” within negative reporting of the self-declared state, do not appear in this corpus.

<sup>5</sup> Upper case.

<i>movement (Islamic movement)</i>	9.14
<i>thought (Islamic thought)</i>	9.14
<i>Bank (Islamic Bank of Britain)</i>	9.12
<i>study (Islamic studies)</i>	9.09
<i>law<sup>6</sup> (Islamic law)</i>	9.06
<i>Finance (Islamic Finance)</i>	8.92
<i>Jihad (Hamas and Islamic Jihad)</i>	8.85

These top collocates create a semantic space in which the word *Islamic* circulates that is different from the space conditioning the same word in mainstream press. The analysis of semantic preference can retrieve the frames of representation of the word *Islamic* in comparison with the frames of representation analysed in mainstream press, which were found to be highly marked by collocates denoting extremism and violence (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013). As Sinclair demonstrates (1991), words can be associated with collocates from a definable semantic set which can be evaluative (i.e. negative, positive). In the case of *the MN* corpus, the semantic preference related to *Islamic* builds a space marked by philanthropy and objects of study. In mainstream press, the former is absent and the latter is only present in a minority of cases. Even in the rare cases where *extremist* appears as a collocate of *Islamic* in *the MN* corpus (eight instances), it is reported in quotations from officials, mainly to dispute it. This is observed in all eight concordances, as in the following examples.

Extract 1:

« When The Muslim News first contacted the Met<sup>7</sup> and asked a spokesperson why the police never use the term Catholic with the words extremist or terrorist when referring to the IRA<sup>8</sup>, she replied: “Irish Republicans are only concerned with Ireland but Islamic extremist incidents occur around the world.” She justified the use of the term “Islamic” with “extremist” by saying: “They are Islamists who carry out extremist violence.” » (*Met police pledges to be sensitive in future to Muslims, Debating Muslim News*, January 2000)

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<sup>6</sup> Lower case.

<sup>7</sup> Referring to the Metropolitan Police.

<sup>8</sup> Referring to the Irish Republican Army.

Extract 2:

« The police have come under attack from the Muslim community. Firstly for using the Islamophobic phrase “Islamic extremist terrorist”, which paints the whole Muslim community as ‘extremists’ and ‘terrorists’. Secondly, for the harassment of British Muslims. »  
(*Muslim homes raided by security forces*, **Debating Muslim News**, March 2000)

The collocation between *Islamic* and *extremist*, although routinely present in mainstream press, only occurs in *the MN* for the purpose of contestation. *The MN* clearly uses *Islamic extremist* to question it, contacting those who express it (the Metropolitan Police spokesperson) to challenge them (asking why extremist is not used with “Catholic” to refer to the IRA). This seems to reflect a general rejection of the collocation by British Muslims considering it Islamophobic (the Muslim community attacking the police “for using the Islamophobic phrase” as reported in extract 2). *The MN* moves away from the mainstream use to redefine *Islamic*, collocating it with positive semantic prosody by connecting it to fields that are perceived positively such as philanthropy (e.g. *Islamic Foundation*), academic research (e.g. *Centre for Islamic Studies*) and studied disciplines (e.g. *Islamic history*, *Islamic law*, *Islamic finance* etc...).

As Partington argues (1998, pp.66-68; 2004, p.131), semantic prosody carries evaluative meaning. The proximity of frequent collocates leads to the association of an evaluative meaning by a process of semantic transfer that conditions the node word (Louw, 2000, p.56). Xiao and McEnery (2006, p.107) show that consistent collocates of a node word can condition its meaning by the repetitive space of representation or context in which it appears, to the extent that the node word can carry such evaluative meanings even when appearing with different collocates or in a different context. While the analysis of mainstream press demonstrates that the word *Islamic* tends to hold a negative discourse prosody of extremism (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.45), the absence of extremism as a salient frame of representation and the presence of collocates carrying positive meanings in *the MN* may be an attempt from the newspaper to redefine the word *Islamic*. The highly frequent semantic association between *Islamic* and conflict, contributing to the latter being a dominant topic in mainstream press, is omitted in *the MN*. In discourse, what is omitted can be as significant as what is present. As Fairclough puts it “in any representation, you have to decide what to include and what to exclude, and what to “foreground” and what to “background”” (1995, p.4).



By consistently linking *Islamic* to thought and philanthropy, *the MN* reclaims the term and shifts its mainstream semantic preference for its readers towards a more positive connotation. The resonance or dissonance of *the MN* discourse in comparison to mainstream press is further examined with another Corpus Analysis method: keyness.

## **1.2. Keyness**

A pertinent tool for making comparisons between different corpora, keyness allows the identification of the unique ‘aboutness’ of a corpus, comparing it to a larger reference corpus and determining its high frequency keywords. As mentioned in the methodology, there are four reference corpora used in this analysis. The comparison of *the MN* to each reference corpus produces a word list. Four comparative word lists are then analysed to determine the keywords in *the MN*.

### **1.2.1. The British National Corpus**

Completed in 1994, the BNC is an old corpus that does not span the time period under analysis, which may be misleading as observed with the word *Islamophobia*. When using the BNC as a reference corpus, *Islamophobia* appears as having a very high keyness in *the MN*, which is mainly due to its complete absence in the BNC. In fact, Richardson argues that the use of this word has been very rare before 2000 (when it started to significantly increase) even though it has first been introduced in English by Edward Said in 1985 (Richardson, 2009, p.3). The absence of the word from the BNC can therefore be associated with its relative absence in public discourses by the time the BNC was compiled.

### **1.2.2. The New Model Corpus**

This corpus helps mitigate the issue raised with the BNC as it has been built more recently (2008). It contains 100 million words of general English collected from general and targeted web crawls. When comparing *the MN* to NMC, *Islamophobia* is found to be a frequent keyword in *the MN* even though it appears 78 times in NMC, making this comparison more reliable than the BNC one.

### 1.2.3. ukWaC

Created in 2007 through web crawling, this is one of the largest available English corpora (2 billion words). To build it, randomly-selected mid-frequency content words from the BNC were used as seed words to crawl the URLs (Ferraresi et al., 2008, p.47). The seed words covered a variety of topics and genres in order to create a generic corpus.

### 1.2.4. The SiBol/Port (Siena-Bologna, Portsmouth) corpus

This corpus is the most relevant corpus for this study as it is composed of English broadsheet newspapers. Using this corpus is helpful in indicating the aboutness of *the MN* in comparison to other newspapers while clarifying which topics indicating words are more routinely present in news reports in comparison to general corpora (i.e. the BNC, NMC and ukWaC). For example, comparing *the MN* to the three general corpora above, *Israeli* appears as a keyword in *the MN* suggesting that this word has a unique presence in *the MN*. However, when comparing *the MN* to the SiBol/Port corpus, *Israeli* does not emerge as a keyword in *the MN*, indicating that it has a frequent presence in other newspapers, not just *the MN*. As such, when considering the comparison to the SiBol/Port corpus, it becomes possible to identify the topics that are significantly key in *the MN* not only because of their relative absence in other general corpora, but also due to their absence in mainstream reporting.

The four word lists derived from the keyness analysis when comparing *the MN* to each of the four corpora are then analysed to explore the most common words amongst them. Fifty common words appearing within the top frequent 200 words in all four word lists are observed. Some of these words are also amongst the most frequent words in *the MN*. These words indicate the ‘aboutness’ of *the Muslim News* in comparison with other corpora.

The following table outlines these words, grouped in topics, with indications of the words’ meanings in context where necessary.

Table 3: Top fifty common words in the word lists comparing *the MN* to reference corpora

Topic	Word
Religion	<i>Muslim, Muslims, Muslimah, Islam, Islamic, Mosque, Mosques, mosques, mosque, Ramadan, Prophet, Hajj, Makkah, Halal</i> <i>Qur</i> (referring to <i>Qur'an</i> ) <i>Shari</i> (referring to <i>Shari'a</i> or <i>Shari'ah</i> )
Hijab	<i>Hijab</i> <i>Niqab</i> <i>Headscarf</i>
Violence and Hatred	<i>Islamophobia, Islamophobic, Extremism, incitement</i>
<i>The MN</i>	<i>MN</i> (referring the to <i>the Muslim News</i> ) <i>AJV, Ahmed, Versi</i> (referring to pieces written by Ahmed J Versi) <i>Pound</i> (referring to British Pound for costs advertisement and announcements) <i>Matrimonial</i> (referring to a regular column in <i>the Muslim News</i> )
Places	<i>Kosova, Chechnya, Guantanamo</i>
Groups	<i>non-Muslims, non-Muslim, Palestinian, Palestinians, Ummah, ummah</i>
Religious authority	<i>Imam, Imams, Shaykh, imams</i>
Organisations	<i>MCB</i> (referring to the Muslim Council of Britain) <i>Interpal</i> (referring to the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund)
People (mainly leaders)	<i>Siddiqui</i> (referring to different people but mainly Kalim Siddiqui – founder of The Muslim Institute and Ghayasuddin Siddiqui – Leader of the Muslim Parliament) <i>Sarwar</i> (referring to different people but mainly Muhammad Sarwar – former Muslim MP) <i>Hussain</i> (referring to different people but mainly Saddam Hussain) <i>Iqbal, Sacranie</i> (referring to the founding Secretary General of MCB, serving from 1997 to 2006) <i>Khan</i> (referring to different people mainly Muslim activists and sport champions, especially Amir Khan)

In order to categorize the words *Islamophobia*, *Islamophobic*, *incitement* and *extremism*, I looked at their use in the four reference corpora and in *the MN* corpus. This helps mitigate biases by allowing the words, according to their use in the different corpora, to indicate the topics:

- *Islamophobia*

The most frequent collocate in NMC is *racism*. In ukWaC, the large size of the corpus presents several collocates. The most salient ones are *Racism*, *anti-semitism*, *anti-Semitism*, *racism*, *homophobia*, *Muslims*, *Islam*, *discrimination*, *institutional* amongst others. *Racism* is the most important collocate in SiBol/Port corpus.

- *Islamophobic*

The reference to racism is further enhanced with the frequent collocation between the words *Islamophobic* and *racist* in NMC and in SiBol/Port. In ukWaC, it collocates with similar words, mainly with *racist* and *attack*.

- *Incitement*

Several collocates in NMC refer to hatred, racism and criminality, although the most significantly frequent collocate is *violence*. The same patterns of use are observed in the BNC where *hatred*, *propaganda* and *violence* are the most frequent collocates. *Hatred* and *violence* are also the most important collocates in ukWaC. In SiBol/Port, *hatred* is the most important collocate.

- *Extremism*

Unlike other words, *extremism* has different collocates in the different reference corpora, and between them and *the MN*. The following words appear to be the most frequent collocates in NMC: *Islamic*, *Islamist*, *religious*, *violent*, *Muslim*, *wing*, *political*, *fight*, *terrorism* and *violence*. In ukWaC, the analysis shows similar results to the NMC, with words such as *Islamic*, *religious* and *terrorism*. In SiBol/Port, newspapers tend to use *extremism* in proximity with the word *Islamic*. Unlike these corpora, the word *extremism* in the BNC does not appear as a collocate to *religion*, *terrorism* or *Muslim*, but to *political*.

In the *MN*, *Islamophobia* also tends to collocate with *racism* and *extremism*, *Islamophobic* with *attack* and *racist*, while *incitement* collocates the most with *hatred*. *Extremism*, however, has several collocates including *violent*, *terrorism*, *Islamophobia*. In general, the four terms tend to appear within the same collocational space (within the five words before or after the node word, *extremism*). The three collocates (*violence*, *terrorism* and *Islamophobia*) can be observed in the following random sample of the concordances of *extremism* from the *MN* corpus.

#### Concordances: *Extremism*

File ID	Concordance
file2623214	is equated immediately with ‘fanatics’, ‘ <b>extremism</b> ’, ‘fundamentalism’ and ‘threat to the West’
file2623871	the experience of dealing with <b>violence</b> , <b>extremism</b> and <b>terrorism</b> indicates to British police
file2624071	commitment to Kashmir but rejecting any <b>extremism</b> . With Afghanistan ‘pacified’ with the ouster
file2624090	curriculum which is blamed by the US for <b>extremism</b> and <b>terrorism</b> and offer financial support
file2624215	isolationism; oppression of women to ‘links’ with <b>extremism</b> and <b>terrorism</b> abroad. One sees recognition
file2624553	rather than act as a hotbed of ossified <b>extremism</b> . War on <b>terror</b> deepened division says Amnesty
file2623847	<b>Islamophobic</b> as “the last three times whenever <b>extremism</b> is mentioned it is equated with Islam.
file2624219	being projected by India as an issue of ‘ <b>extremism</b> , <b>terrorism</b> and fundamentalism’ although
file2624254	domestic roots of <b>terrorism</b> and religious <b>extremism</b> . The West, particularly the United States

Considering common collocates in the four reference corpora and in the *MN*, it is safe to group the four terms under the topic of Violence and Hatred. This commonality is particularly observed when looking at collocates of *Islamophobia*, *Islamophobic* and *incitement*. However, when considering most reference corpora, *extremism* is more likely to be grouped with *Islamic* or *religious*. This suggests *extremism* should be placed under the topic of Religion. However, in the few instances where *Islamic* collocates with *extremist* in the *MN*, the collocation is contested as shown below. Furthermore, the analysis of *extremism* and its collocates (e.g. *violent*, *terrorism*) in the *MN* (as well as some shared collocates of *extremism* in other reference corpora such as NMC and ukWaC), places *extremism* under Violence and Hatred.

Unlike other words in Violence and Hatred, there is a dissonance in the semantic preference of *extremism* between the five corpora. Within the same timeframe, there is difference in the collocational space of *extremism* between the reference corpora, on the one hand, and *the MN* on the other. Within different timeframes, this difference is observed between the reference corpora and the BNC. The semantic preference reveals the collocational space of a word. These collocations can condition the appearance of the word. Hence, the analysis of the semantic preference reveals the frames of representation of words such as *Islamic* or *extremism*. In this case, the similarity in the three recent reference corpora (The New Model Corpus, ukWaC and The SiBol/Port) in collocating between *Islamic* and *extremism* shows a conventional semantic association between a term referring to Islam (*Islamic*) and *extremism* in online and printed language contained in more than one reference corpus. The difference between these three corpora and the BNC, a corpus completed in mid-90s, suggests that this widespread use is recent (*extremism* collocating mostly with *political* in the BNC). It suggests that the discourse on *extremism*, from the late 90s onwards, has been narrowed from a general term related to the political sphere without naming a specific political ideology (*political*) to a specific term in the realm of a particular political ideology or a specific religion (*Islamic*). This association is further strengthened with other terms derived from *Islam*, such as *Islamist* and *Muslim*, appearing as frequent collocates of *extremism* in the recent reference corpora.

Whilst this diachronic difference can be interpreted in light of broader political and societal changes (e.g. secularism, 9/11 and the discourse of the war on terrorism), the converging findings of previous studies on the press discourse on Islam and Muslims highlight the increasing role of the press in reinforcing, legitimizing and perpetuating a strong association between Islam (with the use of various words derived from *Islam*) and extremism (with the use of various words denoting extreme belief). In Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study (2013), a strong collocation between *Islamic* and words denoting extreme belief (including *extremism*, *fundamentalism* and *radicalism*) is demonstrated. These words are found in one in six instances where the word *Islamic* appears across the mainstream press corpus (Ibid., p.166). This resonates with findings in Poole's study of press representations of Muslims. Poole finds a continued coverage of stories linking extremism and British Muslims before and after 9/11. In such stories, it is common to refer to belief as an explanatory factor not only for extremism, but also for crime. Such deviant behaviours "appeared to be based on Islamic beliefs (rather than on customs)" (Poole, 2002, p.82).

The strong association between Islam and extremism is not only demonstrated in the widespread collocation between *Islamic* and words denoting extreme beliefs. It is also observed in the frequent association between other words referring to Islam (such as *Muslims*) and *extremism*. Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study (2013) shows evidence of widespread collocations of *Muslim*, *Muslims* and *Islam* with *extremism* across mainstream newspapers. Other words related to Islam, such as those denoting branches of Islam, (*Sunni*, *Shia*) also collocate with words referring to extremism (Ibid., p.145). *Muslim community* is also found to refer frequently to extremism (Ibid., pp.128-129).

The lack of a definition of extremism in the discourse of mainstream press on Muslims, combined with a repetitive association between extremism and Islam could reinforce the effect of collocations in “form[ing] networks of mutual prediction” (Stubbs, 2001c, p.454), by which the appearance of one word announces the presence of the other and “the choice of one word conditions the choice of the next” (Sinclair, 2004, p.22). As such, this discursive strategy could reinforce, legitimize and perpetuate the association between Islam and extremism. The repetitive reference to Islam in relation to extremism, facilitated by strong collocations, could define the semantic preference of *Islam(ic)* with negative associations and contribute to “the cumulative conception of Islam as threatening” (Poole, 2002, p.45).

There is a striking contrast between the absence of this negative collocation between *Islamic* and *extremism* in *the MN* and in mainstream press. In fact, as noted with the concordances below where *Islamic* and *extremism* appear, the few concordances in which both *Islamic* and *extremism* appear in *the MN* mainly exist due to internal intertextuality, which is typical of news reporting (Richardson, 2006, p.101). Internal intertextuality refers to the explicit presence of a prior text in a current one, with the former clearly marked as a quotation in the latter. This is common in newspapers as they routinely include reported speech in their content (e.g. parts of a press release, testimonies, quotations from authorities etc...). In *the MN*, in 10 out of 12 concordances containing the words *Islamic* and *extremism*, their presence is part of a reported speech clearly marked with a direct quotation. The incorporation of reported speech in newspapers, while typical, is significant because it can be used strategically to reveal the writer’s position and convey evaluative statements to the readers. In half of the concordances, the presence of *Islamic* and *extremist* appears under a strategic quotation, that is with scare quotes. “Conventionally known as ‘scare quotes’ the reported speech, writing or thoughts of others are often placed in quotation marks in order to indicate their contentious nature” (Ibid., p.102). This is observed in the first two extracts where

*Islamic extremism* appears in scare quotes. In all four extracts below, *Islamic extremism* is quoted in texts that highlight its controversy and condemn its use. Scare quotes can also be used for hedging – to convey distance from (and caution in) adopting the terms placed between the quotes (i.e. ‘*Islamic extremism*’). As observed in the extracts below, although the intention behind the quotes could be to hedge the terms semantically, the effect is the opposite. The quotes increase the visibility and impressionistic salience of *Islamic extremism*, putting into relief its contentious nature to criticize its use as an “objectionable term” as described in extract 4.

Extract 3:

« UAF<sup>9</sup> Joint Secretary, Weyman Bennett, told The Muslim News EDL’s<sup>10</sup> anti-Islamic extremism manifesto was a cover for sinister fascist agenda. “In the 1970s the National Front used to organise racist demonstrations against black people through ‘anti-mugging’ front groups. Today the BNP<sup>11</sup> and other fascist organisations use the issue of ‘Islamic extremism’ in exactly the same way,” he said. » (*Anti-Islamic march confronted, Islamophobia*, August 2009)

Extract 4:

« The Today programme on BBC Radio 4 on February 22, used a barrage of objectionable terms while reporting the case of the Britons arrested in Yemen, reports Chowdry Mueen-Uddin of MCB. The programme was presented by John Humphrey and Sue McGregor and edited by Roger Harrison and Stephen Gibson. The report lasting about 5 minutes, used terms such as: ‘Islamic plot’, ‘Islamic militant’, ‘Islamic extremism’, ‘Islamic threat’ and ‘Islamic army’ about 12 times in total. » (*Brixton bomb revives Islamophobia in media, Home News*, April 1999)

Extract 5:

« So many examples of Islamophobia and Islamophobic attacks are published in The Muslim News. Firstly, many of them are neglected by the major newspapers. So if it wasn’t for your newspaper, we would be in the dark about these attacks. Secondly, why such an increase? I believe it is because of continuous stories in the media blaming all Muslims for terrorism and blaming Islam for Muslims being terrorists. And again politicians of all colour talk about

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<sup>9</sup> Referring to Unite against Fascism, an anti-fascist pressure group based in London.

<sup>10</sup> Referring to English Defence League, an anti-Muslim far-right street movement.

<sup>11</sup> Referring to the British National party, a far-right political party in the United Kingdom.



Muslim extremism, Islamic extremism, twisted forms of Islam, etc etc etc. » (*Islamophobia on the increase*, **Letters**, December 2009)

Extract 6:

« “The accusation of Islamic extremism being widespread on campus is largely unfounded and thus universities must balance the need for national security with the need for freedom of speech and religious practice,” the Report said. » (*Targeting extremists in universities*, **Home News**, September 2005)

In extracts 4 and 6, contentious adjectives and nouns are used to describe the association between *Islamic* and *extremism* such as *accusation*, *a barrage of objectionable terms* and *unfounded*, all of which appear within the extended text of the concordances. In fact, extract 4 appears in an article that looks at the use of *Islamic extremism* in mainstream press as an Islamophobic attack by the media on British Muslims. The article reports a meeting between the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) and several mainstream newspapers “to discuss its portrayal of the Muslim community in Britain with particular reference to the issue of their use of terminology such as “extremists”, “terrorists” etc.”. While statistically pointing out the media bias on the collocation between *Islamic* and words denoting extreme beliefs such as *extremism*, the article argues that such associations portray Muslims as violent and make them “the target of the Islamophobic British media”.

The mainstream repetitive use of this association reported in *the MN* seems to be alarming not only to Muslim organisations (MCB) and *the MN*, but also to *the MN* readers. In extract 5, derived from a reader’s letter, the link between this prevailing association and Islamophobia is highlighted. The increase of Islamophobic attacks is causally linked to persistent media coverage of Muslims as extremists and terrorists (“why such an increase? I believe it is because of continuous stories in the media blaming all Muslims for terrorism”) as well as political discourse on Muslims and Islam.

*The MN* conveys condemning statements linking the conventional use of *Islamic extremism* and Islamophobia. Yet, *the MN* relies on intertextuality as a discursive strategy that allows it to distance itself from controversial opinions while also subtly approving of them. In extract 3, a comparison is drawn between the way anti-mugging front groups were a cover for racism in the 1970s and anti-Islamic extremism being a cover of fascism nowadays. Whilst parts of the reported speech are contained in clearly marked boundaries (quotation marks and using the reporting clause “he said”), the degree of “boundary maintenance” (Fairclough, 1992, p.282)

is not as clear in the first sentence, as it is quoted indirectly (“told”) and separately from the quoted exact words of UAF Joint Secretary. The statement linking anti-Islamic extremism and fascism and the alarming adjective employed (“sinister”) are incorporated in the text as an indirect quotation that frames the direct quote following it. This ambiguity makes it unclear whether the first sentence in this extract is reproduced by *the MN* from the original source (UAF Joint Secretary) or represented to accommodate a stand by *the MN*’s reporter. As Fairclough demonstrates, indirect quotations are “ambivalent – one cannot be sure whether the words of the original are reproduced or not” (Ibid.). In extract 3, the reference to anti-mugging front groups recalls the racist demonstrations organised by the National Front in opposition to non-white migrants. The association between *anti-Islamic extremism* manifestos and Islamophobia is facilitated in the comparison with anti-mugging front group, drawing upon an example which resonates with current popular evaluation of such demonstrations as racist. When the reported speech compares racism and Islamophobia while connecting them both to fascism, *the MN* marks the comparison as belonging to an outside voice, distancing itself with the use of quotation marks.

When referring to *Islamic extremism*, *the MN* strategically places this association in quotations which it questions or criticizes either directly (criticizing the *BBC* used terms) or indirectly with the help of a reader’s voice (as in extract 5 from the reader’s letter). The association between Islam and extremism in the corpus exists because of *the MN* contesting response to its existence in the public discourse. The quotation marks, the selected contentious reporting verbs and the negative evaluative descriptions of the association allows *the MN* to distance itself from this recurrent semantic preference of *Islamic* while representing and reporting what is newsworthy. Unlike mainstream press, the association in *the MN* emerges from the newspaper’s position towards this association which is marked by an attitude of disputation and criticism. Firstly, *the MN* disputes the association of these two terms in the mainstream media that seek to create a causal link between them (with Islam leading to extremism) as a necessary step to denying any validity that this association has. Secondly, by strategically incorporating the opinions of other voices (expressed in a reader’s letter or a quoted statement by the UAF Joint Secretary), *the MN* shifts the causal link between Islam and extremism (as constructed in mainstream press) to argue for a causal link between this mainstream press association and Islamophobia.

As such, instead of words derived from Islam, *extremism* collocates in *the MN* with words referring to violence, terrorism and Islamophobia. This allows the newspaper to displace

*extremism* from the framework of religion observed in mainstream press, negotiate it, and place it within associations referring to hate and violence (which is less controversial for its Muslim readers). In doing so, *the MN* distances *extremism* from conventional associations in press coverage (*Islamic*). By using the same word but with different associations (e.g. violence, terrorism), *the MN* remains relevant in covering extremism as a recurrent news topic in mainstream press, but reinvents its semantic preference shifting its association from religion to violence, terrorism and Islamophobia.

While contesting the mainstream collocation, *the MN* disassociates extremism from Islam and rejects the schema disseminated by mainstream press to create an alternative framework. By establishing alternative associations between *extremism* and violence, terrorism or Islamophobia, *the MN* creates a word space that dissociates Islam (*Islamic*) from violence and connects *extremism* to hatred and violence. As such, not only does *the MN* reflect a general consensus of British Muslims who reject the linkage between Islam and violence, but it also possibly attempts to respond to its readers' expectation (as expressed in extract 5, from the **Letters** section). In fact, semantic preference and discourse prosody play a significant role in the discursive exchange with readers. This is demonstrated in theories of semantic priming and repetition priming (Hoey, 2005). Previous psycho-cognitive research shows that language is stored in the way we receive it and that the repetition of two words as collocates engenders their cognitive and mnemonic association (Neely, 1991). Words which are repeatedly associated have a cumulative effect on readers. A word in a repetitive collocation (e.g. *extremism*) "becomes cumulatively loaded with the contexts and co-texts in which it is encountered" (Hoey, 2005, p.8). As a result of repetitive collocations, a 'priming word' (e.g. *extremism*) can cognitively provoke another word (e.g. *Islamophobia*) in the mind of a reader or listener. As such, one word (e.g. *extremism*) can be recognized with another (e.g. *Islamophobia*) or reproduced with it by readers. Previous studies show that the focus of British newspapers on extremism (when reporting on Muslims) has increased between 2000 and 2008, while their coverage of stories about attacks on Muslims have decreased (Lewis, Mason and Moore, 2011, p.45). By semantically associating extremism to Islamophobia with collocations, *the MN* possibly attempts to employ the mainstream newsworthiness of extremism to develop the newsworthiness of Islamophobia within its readers. This cuts with patterns observed in mainstream newspapers where *Islamophobia* mostly exist in the context of denial and satire about its existence (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study, 2013, p.109).

In fact, *the MN* focus on Islamophobia is notably present in the corpus. Besides its unconventional collocation with *extremism*, the salience of the words *Islamophobia* and *Islamophobic* (making them top key words in the corpus) is further supported by the introduction of a column in *the MN* called **Islamophobic attacks**. The coverage of Islamophobia in the UK started with occasional articles in early editions (from January 1999), then became a separate section appearing in later editions (July 2005, August 2005, October 2006 and November 2006). In this section, several articles appear as an attempt to monitor Islamophobic attacks, cover them and encourage Muslims to report them.

*Islamophobia* made its way to the space of mainstream newspapers after 2000 following its increased use in publications of international organisations (e.g. the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the Organization of Islamic Conference amongst others), even though it was coined a long time before that. In *the MN* corpus, *Islamophobia* is observed from the first month of its publication (January 1998), appearing in 5% of the articles published that year, although its presence gradually moves from stories in the **World News** and **European News** sections (1998) to the ones in the **Home News** section (from 1999 onwards). The gradual increase of its presence makes its keyness develop throughout the years as shown in Chapter Three. While its connection to *extremism*, *terrorism* and *discrimination* varies across the years (see Chapter Three), it continues to refer to the topic of Violence and Hatred throughout the corpus, validating its categorisation in table 3.

Unlike *Islamophobia*, other keywords in the overall corpus are only frequently present in specific years within the corpus. The keyness of keywords categorized under the topics of Hijab, Places, People, Groups and Organisations is due to their frequent appearance in only one or two periods within the twelve years' timeframe. They refer to specific stories (*Kosovo*, *Chechnya*) and follow trends observed in mainstream press coverage during a specific period (e.g. mainstream press stories on Hijab peaking in 2006). These key topics will be investigated through the diachronic analysis in the next chapter (Chapter Three).

Keywords (and topics to which they refer) can shed a light on the various spaces of representation of Muslims in *the MN*. The word list and keyness analysis indicating the salient topics in *the MN* only presents a general mapping of these spaces. These methods, although providing a general overview of what *the MN* covers and represents, do not suffice to examine how it makes these representations. To analyse how Muslims are represented in *the MN*, it is useful to consider another Corpus Analysis method: word sketch.

## 2. How are Muslims represented?

To answer this question, the word sketch method is employed. Word sketch presents a “summary of a word’s grammatical and collocational behaviour” in a corpus (Kilgariff and Tugwell, 2002, p.125). Analysing this behaviour by looking at the collocates of the words *Muslims* and *Muslim* allows the analysis of their representation.

The first frame of representation analysed considers the way Muslims appear as objects/patients of verbs. The verbs which collocate the most when *Muslims* are the object in a sentence are: *concern, kill, target, allow, protect, encourage, include, think, face, say, harass, blame, represent, portray, arrest, want, regard, enable, hope, affect, attack, involve, convict, consider* and *believe*.

Several verbs in this list refer to criminality (*kill, target, harass, blame, arrest, attack* and *convict*). Verbs related to criminality such as *arrest* and *convict* seem to concern British Muslims in the majority of the concordances. This follows the same patterns observed in mainstream press where *Muslims* was found to carry a discourse prosody related to criminality with similar verbs such as *arrest, suspect*, suggesting a negative discourse prosody (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery study, 2013, p.39). *Suspect*, on the other hand, does not appear as a collocate to *Muslims* in *the MN*. In contrast, in mainstream press, the verb is a strong collocate to *Muslims* as objects and appears frequently to refer to *Islamic fanatic, extremist, militant, fundamentalist* and *radical* in stories about arrests. While *arrest* could denote suspected criminality, the strong collocation of verbs that declare a confirmed criminality (*convict*) as opposed to verbs that clearly expect it (*suspect*) suggests that *the MN* focuses mainly on news where such a criminality has been ‘confirmed’ rather than anticipated. While there is a high interest in reporting crime in *the MN*, the absence of the mainstream rhetoric on ‘suspected’ criminals is significant. It suggests that in *the MN*, the newsworthiness of stories where Muslims are criminals is mainly observed when they are criminals, not when they could be criminals. Unlike mainstream press, Muslims are portrayed as criminals in *the MN* retrospectively rather than prospectively.

On the other hand, other collocating verbs carry positive connotations such as *allow, protect, encourage, include* and *enable*. These verbs could serve to comfort readers by portraying Muslims as being supported, included etc... A different picture is revealed when looking at the concordances in context. A random sample of the concordances where *Muslims* collocate with *allow* suggests that over half of these refer to stories where Muslims are *not* allowed (to

do something). A similar pattern of using the negative form is also observed with the collocate *protect* reporting that Muslims are *not* protected in 80% of the concordances.

#### Concordances: *Muslims* as objects of *allow*

Negative form	issues should be much clearer for Muslims.	Muslims	are not <i>allowed</i> to vote for or participate
Affirmative form	that the exponents of free speech <i>allow</i>	Muslims	to have. How much coverage will liberal
Negative form	Muslims. Instead of simply <i>allowing</i> the	Muslims	to leave the service to carry out their
Affirmative form	was the first time in 25 years that Iraqi	Muslims	were <i>allowed</i> to commemorate the event after
Affirmative form	government road shows. The best way is <i>allow</i>	Muslims	to run their affairs. Let them evolve their
Negative form	whose choose to be individuals, why is it	Muslims	are not <i>allowed</i> to be individuals? Democracy
Negative form	mosque, Kadeer said. "During Ramadan, the	Muslims	are not <i>allowed</i> to open restaurants after
Affirmative form	13, 2002. This agreement also <i>allowed</i> the	Muslims	to be represented as a separate group at
Negative form	and marginalised groups and their issues.	Muslims	are not <i>allowed</i> to commit suicide even
Affirmative form	police sealed off the road to <i>allow</i> the	Muslims	fulfil their obligations. The LMC "is genuinely
Negative form	No discussion of any aspect of Islam or	Muslims	is <i>allowed</i> to pass, it seems, without inviting
Negative form	told The Muslim News. "They did not <i>allow</i>	Muslims	to move to a new barricaded area even though

#### Concordances: *Muslims* as objects of *protect*

Negative form	discrimination law is not sufficient to <i>protect</i>	Muslims	and that legislation against religious
Affirmative form	religious hatred so that the two million	Muslims	are <i>protected</i> (Jews and Sikhs are protected
Negative form	and so the purpose of the law to <i>protect</i>	Muslims	seems not to work. Fallujah attacks Sir
Affirmative form	am not going to break the law." What if	Muslims	were <i>protected</i> under law will he allow
Negative form	teacher of the Luton school said, as long as	Muslims	are not <i>protected</i> under any legislation
Negative form	appeasement failed so tragically to <i>protect</i> the	Muslims	in Bosnia). The Muslim community must continue
Negative form	atrocities and its refusal to <i>protect</i> the	Muslims	, he responded: "These are speculations.
Negative form	. The police have stopped <i>protecting</i> the	Muslims	. Cries of partisan behaviour by the police
Negative form	legislation is so weak that it cannot <i>protect</i>	Muslims	whilst Jews and other faith communities

The sentences where *encourage*, *include*, and *enable* collocate with *Muslims* are overwhelmingly in the affirmative form. Most sentences where *include* appears tend to refer to the inclusion of Muslims in British policies, laws, public events etc... However, while *include* appears mostly in the affirmative form, it does not always refer to a positive inclusion. In a quarter of the concordances where *include* collocates with *Muslims*, Muslims are reported to be included in an exclusionary law or practice. In the first example below, a quote by the Secretary General of the MCB includes Muslims in groups that are treated as second class citizens in the UK due to “the hierarchy of rights” in the legal system. In the second one, a columnist at *the MN* includes Muslims in “people of faith” who are blamed for other nations’ problems and whose rights are excluded. Another observed use of this verb includes Muslims in victims of abuse and terrorism.

Extract 7:

« “For far too long one of the biggest injustices has been the hierarchy of rights in our legal system, which has caused many groups, including Muslims, to be treated as second class citizens,” Sacranie said. » (*Muslims welcome outlawing religious discrimination*, **Home News**, October 2004)

Extract 8:

« I’m frustrated that as a nation, we have a discourse that says that just because there are problems – serious problems – in many Muslim countries with regards to human rights, religious practice and tolerance, then that means Muslims here are responsible for that, and that people of faith, including Muslims, should be denied rights here. » (*Not in my name*, **Comment**, November 2007)

Although different from verbs referring to criminality, these ‘positive’ verbs are not unproblematic. The predominant pattern in using the negative form with *allow* and *protect*, the contexts in which *include* is employed to highlight exclusion and abuse, as well as the general salience of verbs characterizing Muslims as being supported (or not) portray Muslims in a state of vulnerability.

A third group of verbs refers to the representation of Muslims with the verbs *represent*, *portray*, *regard* and *consider*. In all the concordances on Muslims as objects of portrayal, the negative mass media representation is highlighted, often challenged and condemned.

## Concordances: *Muslims* as objects of *portray*

File ID	Concordance		
file2623316	western stereotype that Islam oppresses women.	Muslims	therefore are habitually <b>portrayed</b> as wife
file2624844	condemned the way the media has <b>portrayed</b>	<b>Muslims</b>	calling it “absurd and crude coverage”
file2625756	negative way the media is <b>portraying</b> the	<b>Muslims</b>	. Yours, Fatima Ahmed
file2626335	contributions being made at a time when	<b>Muslims</b>	worldwide are often <b>portrayed</b> so negatively
file2626477	It could be the way the media <b>portrays</b>	<b>Muslims</b>	- as terrorists or extremists or traitors
file2627485	to the way media and politicians <b>portray</b>	<b>Muslims</b>	and Islam in the West. They look at Muslims

Finally, the use of the verb *kill* is mainly present in reports on Muslims killed in conflicts outside the UK (e.g. Afghanistan, Mumbai, Palestine and Iraq). However, in few cases, the verb is used to report on anti-Muslim campaigns and slogans in the UK as in the example below.

### Extract 9:

« The Joacph family were forced to cut short a holiday when neighbours alerted them to the racist attack on their home in Saltersgill, Middlesbrough. Slogans, including the words “kill Muslims” and “terrorists live here” were painted on walls and doors. » (*Family target of anti-Muslim slur, Islamophobic Attacks*, October 2006)

Other verbs connoting violence or hostility such as *target*, *harass*, *blame* and *attack* consistently appear in concordances related to stories about Islamophobic *attacks* where *Muslims* are *targeted*, *harassed* and/or *blamed*. Almost all the above collocating verbs with *Muslims* as patients convey problematic and negative experience (e.g. Muslims being arrested, attacked, blamed). This converges with mainstream discourses where the portrayal of Muslims as objects of verbs is marked by a negative discourse prosody (...) related to criminality (Ibid.). In mainstream press, negative verbs also appear as collocates where *Muslims* are subjects/actors. A predominant mainstream discourse on Muslims as scroungers describes them with negative verbs of agency portraying them as opportunistic and scrounging. How do verbs of agency used with *Muslims* in *the MN* portray them?



The second frame of representation considers the actions of Muslims by looking at the verbs that collocate the most with *Muslims* as doers (subject of the verb). These are: *live, feel, have, be, do, need, make, face, suffer, become, come, want, believe, find, take, condemn, ask, think, continue, play, see, turn, begin, get, receive*.

In all thirty instances where Muslims are reported to *face* something in *the MN*, *discrimination* and *injustice* appear to occur as the main issues within the five words span of the concordance, often quoting other reports. The same issues (discrimination and injustice) are also frequently present with the word *suffer* emphasizing the presence of a ‘Muslim penalty’ that Muslims face or suffer from, as in these random samples:

#### Concordances: *Muslims face*

File ID	Concordance
file2623278	the institutionalised discrimination we <b>Muslims</b> <i>face</i> are being slowly recognised, a report
file2623869	position on this issue now? WH: Too often <b>Muslims</b> <i>face</i> discrimination purely because of their
file2624493	antipathy to Muslims. The disadvantage <b>faced</b> by <b>Muslims</b> in trying to address the democratic deficiency

#### Concordances: *Muslims suffer*

File ID	Concordance
file2623846	the University of Derby which shows that <b>Muslims</b> <i>suffer</i> a higher level of unfair treatment
file2623939	, are at the bottom of every league. The <b>Muslims</b> <i>suffer</i> the most severe problems of social
file2625811	Kausar Stirling, Scotland Science Health <b>Muslims</b> <i>suffer</i> poor housing, health and economy

Other verbs that are seemingly neutral (e.g. *live, feel*) tend to also convey a negative experience in place and time, as in the concordances below. Muslims are described as living in “deprived areas” and “challenging times”:

#### Concordances: *Muslims live*

File ID	Concordance
file2625964	10% of the most deprived areas and 40% of <b>Muslims</b> <i>live</i> in deprived housing. The subject of
file2624160	relief camps across the Gujarat State. 68,000 <b>Muslims</b> are <i>living</i> in relief camps in Ahmedabad
file2626975	insurance, it is alarming that the two million <b>Muslims</b> <i>living</i> in Britain have never had the choice
file2625811	, the report also found that whilst many <b>Muslims</b> <i>live</i> in deprived areas they were also likely
file2623981	The Author is Chair, Friends of Al Aqsa <b>Muslims</b> are <i>living</i> in challenging times These are

Concordances describing Muslims' place and state of living tend to appear with statistical reporting of the number of Muslims living in a place (e.g. Midlands, Britain) and/or a condition, usually a negative one (e.g. deprived housing, fear). In these concordances, a tendency of referencing reports, census and spokespeople is noticed. Unlike statements that were strategically quoted with scare quotes conveying their contentious nature (as seen in the concordances about *Islamic extremism*), the quoted statistics in the concordances where Muslims are described as living a negative experience are conveyed with reporting clauses that validate them ("presented statistics", "the report also found"). Quoting reports and spokespeople representing authority (e.g. academics) supports the credibility of the statistics and statements about what Muslims *live*. The use of reporting verbs such as *showed*, *provide evidence*, *finds*, *discovered* and *stresses* (all found in the extended concordances) validate the referenced reports. They are verbs that show assertion of (and give importance to) the reported findings rather than question them (as it would be with the reporting verbs *claim* or *allege*). Reporting verbs are not used arbitrarily in journalistic practices – "the verbal process chosen to characterise reported speech frames reader understandings of the reported event and, in some cases, this may be ideological" (Richardson, 2006, p.103). The verbs employed by *the MN* when quoting reports about Muslims' experiences show the newspaper's affirmation of these findings.

Another common feature is an abundance of texts (containing *Muslims live*) derived from the **Letters** section of the newspaper. The majority of the expanded texts describe concerns and negative experiences that affect Muslims living in a particular place (e.g. *Britain, Germany, Europe, London, the UK* etc...). Recurrent issues are exclusion/discrimination, anxiety/identity crisis, Islamophobia, fear and media bias. This is supported by the examination of concordances containing *Muslims feel* in the overall corpus. In a random sample of 15 concordances with the collocation *Muslims feel*, two thirds of the concordances report negative feelings, mainly alienation, racism, discrimination, inequality, marginalization and anger. In the five concordances expressing positive feelings, two of them appear without hedging, one of which concerns Canadian Muslims. The three other concordances are hedged with modal verbs (*would*, *can*), expressing possibility rather than reporting facts (*if*) and undermining the decreased feeling of foreignness amongst Muslims with *a little less*. In fact, a direct reference to *Muslims feeling* more or less British emerge in a fifth of the sampled concordances. The concordances convey different and opposing opinions on British Muslims' feeling of foreignness. The concordances appear in different years (1998,

2007 and 2009) and from different voices (a quote by Chairman of Islamia Schools Trust, a letter by a reader in the **Letters** section, and survey's findings reported in an editorial).

Concordances: *Muslims feel*

File ID	Concordance
file2626413	in the media, the common findings confirm that <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> more British and are less likely to try to
file2624281	theme instead. The sense of alienation <b>felt</b> by <b>Muslims</b> , a microcosm of the disenfranchisement and
file2624872	press coverage was partly to blame. He said, “ <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> they are marginalised through
file2625788	the world, and their support for their fellow <b>Muslims</b> who are <b>feeling</b> the brunt of racism. “The road
file2626961	during the day use adult language that many <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> is not appropriate. “The songs are 99%
file2625273	Interpretations’. This can only be possible if <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> confident and qualified enough to go
file2627118	is that such policies make things worse. <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> they are not equal to others - they are
file2626294	become unsafe then ever before, we the British <b>Muslims</b> <b>feels</b> unsafe, our human rights are being
file2627442	madrasahs and to teach citizenships, to make <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> more British despite no evidence that
file2625398	Muslim News, Ahmed J Versi. Versi told him that <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> reluctant to report as there are
file2623064	Burials” need to be addressed and would help “ <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> more at ease and increase their
file2622963	society through education. Today, 1.5 million <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> a little less foreign in their own homeland
file2625660	contributes to an atmosphere in which many <b>Muslims</b> <b>feel</b> under suspicion and criminalised, thus
file2625804	and immigrant-friendly population, Canadian <b>Muslims</b> never really <b>felt</b> the need to be fearful – of
file2625317	“I have had telephone calls from disturbed <b>Muslims</b> who <b>feel</b> angered by what happened and will be

But while highlighting the problems that Muslims experience, the omnipresence of legal discourse referring to criminality contributes to the problematisation (as opposed to the normalization) of Muslims which has been found in mainstream media. This omnipresence is also observed in the high frequency of legal words such as *police*, *right*, *law*, *case* and *rights*, all of which appear within the 100 most frequent words in the corpus (see Table 1).

The findings from both studies conducted by Poole (2002) and Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013) confirm the recurrent themes of criminality and violence in mainstream reporting about Muslims that contribute to the generalization of Muslims as violent and potential criminals. The recurrence of such representations could lead to stereotypical generalizations concerning Muslims and Islam. According to Akbarzadeh and Smith

“recurring language used to describe Islam and Muslims (...) can come to be representative of all Muslims and Islam as a religion” (Akbarzadeh and Smith, 2005, p.4). However, localizing Muslims in a particular place, as seen in some cases of the concordance *Muslims live*, can counter generalizing representations as it specifies which Muslims are being portrayed (e.g. Muslims in Britain, in India etc...). Another framework of representation that is analysed concerns the geographical location of Muslims. This aims to answer the question: where are the Muslims that *the MN* is talking about located?

The analysis shows that *Britain* is by far the most frequent collocate in the frame [Muslims in + noun]. *Europe* and European countries such as *Germany*, *France*, *Kosova* and *Bosnia* also appear as collocates. Other places collocating with *Muslims* are *Guajarat*, *India*, *UK*, the *West*, *Scotland*, *London* and *Iraq*. Some of these places collocating with *Muslims* locate them outside the boundaries of the UK. This, however, does not indicate that most of the Muslims that *the MN* reports about are outside the UK, as *Britain* has a stronger collocation with *Muslims* than all these locations combined. Moreover, *British* is overwhelmingly the most important collocating modifier of *Muslims* in the entire corpus, showing that British Muslims remain the most represented. This is consistent with Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery’s findings on mainstream news where a focus on reporting about Muslims in the UK is shown (2013, p.121). However, *the MN* focus on British Muslims inside their country is inconsistent with findings on Muslim newspapers in countries where Muslims represent a minority, such as India. Previous research finds that news about Muslims were mostly international, concerning Muslims outside the country where the newspaper is distributed. Nayar argues that this might be attempting to foster the readers’ belonging to an Ummah. “Essentially exposed to the happenings in the Islamic world, the Muslim readers have developed a kind of affinity that makes them feel part of the Ummah” (Nayar, 2009, p.42). In *the MN*, articles published as part of the **International News** and **Foreign News** sections multiplied between 2001 (25 articles) and 2002 (56 articles). However, although their number grew since 2002, suggesting a transnational interest, the **Home News** section remains consistently larger than all other sections in *the MN*, usually accounting for over a third of all articles combined.

This said, both *Ummah* and *ummah* have a significant keyness in *the MN* corpus when compared to all reference corpora (see table 3). The two words’ most frequent collocate is *Muslim*. It frequently appears in articles referring to Muslims outside the UK: *Indian*, *American*, *Western*, *European*, *Turkish* and *Chechen* even when some of these articles are placed within the **Home News** section. The reference to *The Muslim Ummah* when covering

stories outside the UK suggests that what affects Muslims outside the UK is of relevance to those inside. *Ummah* is sometimes replaced in these articles (and used interchangeably) by *the global Muslim community* or *the global Muslim world*.

#### Concordances of *Muslim Ummah*

File ID	Concordance
file2623623	living as if in a microcosm of the <i>Muslim</i> <i>Ummah</i> . In his lecture on `Leadership and Obedience
file2623693	and in addition a challenge to the <i>Muslim</i> <i>Ummah</i> 's resolve on testing their claim for the
file2623695	of Allah answer all those in the <i>Muslim</i> <i>Ummah</i> who are embarked on a path that is leading
file2624146	and disunity that has befallen the <i>Muslim</i> <i>Ummah</i> (global Muslims world) at present. However

The collectivizing reference to Muslims with words such as *Ummah*, *community* or *world* is not unproblematic. Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery find monolithic words collectivising Muslims very frequent in mainstream press with expressions such as *the Muslim World* and *the Muslim community*, appearing the most between 2001 and 2003 (2013, pp.115-116). In mainstream media, these designations are used extensively to portray Muslims as a monolithic group, which then facilitates separating them discursively from the British society. As Poole shows, newspapers' articles referring to world affairs representing Islam and Muslims as monolithic "promoted ideas of not belonging, allowing questions about loyalty to be raised and thus working to accentuate difference" (Poole, 2002, p.82). In mainstream press discourse, collectivizing constructions allow the association of Muslims to groups and/or countries outside Britain, and their separation from (and juxtaposition to) 'Britishness'. According to Richardson, the discursive othering of Muslims is first established with a process of separation. Discourses first identify a 'space' (such as a *world*, a *community* or an *Ummah*). This space is rhetorically separated from 'Our own' space. In the following processes of differentiation and negativisation, discourses are then "explaining the workings or composition of this space in contrast to 'Our own'; and third, placing a (negative) social value on both this space and its composition" (2004, p.69). This risks sustaining an orientalist discourse whereby Muslims are essentialized as a monolithic group; separate from, different than, and ultimately opposed to the British society.

The salience of terms such as *Ummah* and *community* in *the MN* follows collectivizing patterns observed in mainstream press and could therefore allow the discursive othering of

Muslims if followed by processes of separation, differentiation and negativisation. Hence, it is important to look at the salience and context of these terms. In *the MN*, collectiveness is the second most frequent topic (see table 1) with words such as *community*, *people*, *world*, *communities* and *groups*. These words occur the most as modifiers collocating with *young* and *Palestinian* (for the word *people*), *Muslim*, *faith* and *minority* (for the words *community* and *communities*) and *Muslim*, *Islamic*, *Arab* and *Western* (for the word *world*). Both *community* and *World* have a high frequency and appear within the 30 most frequent words in the corpus. *Community* appears as the 10<sup>th</sup> most frequent word with 5334 concordances, collocating the most with the modifier *Muslim*. *Muslim* is also the most important collocate for *World*.

In mainstream press, the *Muslim world* is used in opposition to ‘the West’ with words such as *division* and *tension*. In *the MN*, however, a random sample of the concordances in which *the Muslim world* appears with *the West* shows a recurrent theme of *dialogue* and *building bridges* as a way to develop *good relations* between the two ‘worlds’. Nevertheless, the focus on building bridges indicates that the relationship between the two spaces is weak and requires *bridges* and *understanding*. Paradoxically, the omnipresent reference to dialogue in *the MN* evokes mainstream representation of a rupture (a separation) between the two ‘worlds’.

#### Concordances of *The Muslim world* / *The Islamic world* collocating with *the West*

File ID	Concordance		
file2623093	If we are to build real trust between the	West	and the Muslim <i>world</i> then we need to build
file2624743	dialogue between the Muslim <i>world</i> and the	West	. “The whole of the Muslim world is now
file2624773	bridge between the Muslim <i>world</i> and the	West	. Only American Muslims can change America
file2625326	when the spectre of collision between the	West	and the Muslim <i>world</i> appears to be a real
file2625549	the bridges that used to exist between the	West	and the Islamic <i>world</i> ; the absence of
file2625550	understanding between the Islamic <i>world</i> and the	West	. “This Centre makes a great contribution
file2625627	Civilisations’ between the Muslim <i>world</i> and the	West	. So it rests on more responsible members
file2625655	and developing good relations between the	West	and the Muslim <i>world</i> . He has been instrumental
file2625743	Britain should play a role of bridging the	West	and the Muslim <i>world</i> and also respect democratic
file2626373	relations between the Muslim <i>world</i> and the	West	. Ihsanoglu, thanking the University of
file2626543	to place between the Muslim <i>world</i> and the	West	. In that regard, the role to be played

As such, the collectivization of Muslims in *the MN* reproduces reductive and stereotypical portrayals in mainstream press. The salience of terms collectivising Muslims and the space created between them and *the West* echoes the separation and differentiation discourse observed in mainstream press. A defensive discourse that collectivizes Muslims, albeit while promoting dialogue and bridges, can reproduce mainstream representations. First, it risks representing Islam and Muslims as monolithic. Furthermore, collectivizing Muslims facilitates their representation as separate and different. Moore, Mason and Lewis find that such separating and differentiating representations reproduce and regenerate the discourse of a ‘clash of civilisations’ between Islam and ‘the West’ (2011, p.65). In this corpus, ‘the West’ is not the only differentiated space that is frequently referred to in *the MN* when talking about Muslims. Other groups, such as *non-Muslims*, appear as key words in the corpus.

To look at other groups that tend to appear in the same collocational space as Muslims, another relevant frame of representation applies to nouns that appear with *Muslims* in the relation [*Muslims* + and/or + noun]. The words that are the most associated with *Muslims* in this frame are: *Islam, Christians, Jews, Arabs, non-Muslims*.

The nomination of *non-Muslims* (as opposed to *Muslims*) could construct these groups in opposition to each other. But this does not expand in context. In all the concordances where *non-Muslims* appear with *Muslims*, they perform the same agency as subject and are affected in the same way as object, as in the following concordances.

#### Concordances: *Muslims* and/or *non-Muslims*

File ID	Concordance
file2623222	continent, which was a prerequisite for both <b>Muslims</b> and <i>non-Muslims</i> to instigate changes in
file2623623	compassion of Salah al-Din Ayyubi towards <b>Muslims</b> and <i>non-Muslims</i> alike during his liberation
file2623796	inform and appeal to a wide audience of both <b>Muslims</b> and <i>non-Muslims</i> . Radio Ramadan in Manchester
file2623838	misunderstandings <i>non-Muslims</i> and indeed <b>Muslims</b> often have about the limited rights that

Even when looking at *non-Muslims* outside its collocation with *Muslims*, its collocational space is marked with positive verbs and nouns such as *encourage, welcome, dialogue* and *unite*, all appearing in affirmative statements. There is an assimilation extended to specific faith groups collocating with *Muslims* such as *Christians* and *Jews*. When collocating with *Jews*, the assimilation is observed in concordances about Jews and Muslims living in Britain.

While some of these texts base these assimilations on common religious practices (slaughtering animals), most of them refer to shared historical discriminatory or violent experiences faced by these groups in Europe.

Concordances: *Muslims* and/or *Jews*

File ID	Concordance		
file2623080	current legislation, which exempts <i>Jews</i> and	<i>Muslims</i>	from stunning the animals before slaughter
file2623282	pool. Between sixty and seventy thousand	<i>Muslims</i>	and <i>Jews</i> were butchered. This was the ultimate
file2623257	know nothing - suggest a bad look-out for	<i>Muslims</i>	, <i>Jews</i> and blacks in the west, and a further
file2623154	licensed abattoirs. However, he emphasised that	<i>Muslims</i>	and <i>Jews</i> will continue to be exempt from
file2625054	led to the en masse slaughter of Europe's	<i>Muslims</i>	, Jews and others at the hands of Christian
file2625253	era of peace and tranquillity between the	<i>Muslims</i>	and the Jews in Palestine. Had it constituted
file2624129	During her reign, Queen Isabella expelled	<i>Muslims</i>	and Jews from Spain and she is thought

The only exceptions to this assimilative discourse of Muslims with other faith groups is observed in stories about hate speech and Islamophobia, where other faith groups are singled out for having protection, as in the following text.

Extract 10:

« After the trial, Griffin<sup>12</sup> said he had been vindicated, saying that he was not racist but “against Islam.” Unlike Muslims, Jews and Sikhs are protected under incitement to racial hatred laws. » (*BNP given licence to demonise Muslims*, **Top Stories**, November 2006)

In general, an abundance of stories about peace, dialogue and coexistence is observed where most of the collocations between Muslims and other faith groups (*Non-Muslims*, *Jews* and *Christians*) occur. Whilst these frames of representation contrast with mainstream press representations of Muslims being intolerant to other faith groups, dialogue as a process for conflict resolution represents a counter-discourse to conflict, hence evoking it. The omnipresence of a lexicon of dialogue and peace observed in most texts about Muslims and other faith groups hints at their absence (or the need for them). This is detected (when extending the concordances and looking at the full articles about dialogue and coexistence)

<sup>12</sup> On the acquittal of Nick Griffin, the leader of the British National Party, on a charge of inciting hatred when calling Islam “wicked, vicious faith”.



through the significant use of modal verbs (*needed, should, have to, can* etc...) connoting the possibility, the obligation and the need for this dialogue, as seen below.

Extract 11:

« He<sup>13</sup> also argued that we can live in peace as “differences don’t need to lead to disputes.” (...) that the three faiths should have a “common code of ethics, values and principles” which should then be taught in education institutions and therefore the new generation “will be trained for love, justice, equality with the followers of other religions.” » (*Jews, Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths dialogue for peace*, **Top Stories**, August 2008)

Extract 12:

« We need to get beyond ‘tolerance’ which is saying that ‘I put up with you but I would rather you were not here’ to a mutual knowledge and a mutual respect”<sup>14</sup>. » (*Peace and understanding between Muslim and Jewish communities*, **Home News**, March 2008)

Besides modal verbs, the texts frequently rely on the future *tense* (“Our dialogue *will be* a success”) and stress the purpose of the reported actions to highlight a desired future where dialogue and peace would exist (“in efforts to build relations”, “we all have a duty to struggle for mutual respect and peaceful co-existence”, “the great faiths (...) have an obligation to understand each other better”, “to promote dialogue and prevent clash of civilisations”). Furthermore, the texts often refer to the reported events as an “opportunity”, an “aim”, a “call for positive and constructive action” etc...).

### 3. What does *the MN* highlight in its articles?

While the frequency, keyness and collocations of words facilitate the observation of general patterns in the corpus, it is important to acknowledge their limitation in the analysis. The construction and transfer of meanings in newspapers does not only rely on the frequency, keyness and associations of the used words. In fact, other modes, besides language, are employed in *the MN* to build narratives and communicate them. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) show, photos represent powerful paratexts in conveying representations by making grammatical combinations that advance visual statements (that is, the way elements in photos

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<sup>13</sup> Referring to King Abdullah in his speech at an interfaith conference.

<sup>14</sup> A reported extract from a talk by Professor Tariq Ramadan in the Woolf Institute’s Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations (CMJR) in Cambridge.

are combined into a meaningful whole). The visual composition of photos can have a significant meaning potential in representing ideas and people (Machin, 2007).

Even when limiting the analysis to language, other modes (such as typography, layout and punctuation) can suggest a hierarchy in the value attributed to, and expected from, different texts within the same page of a newspaper, and between its different pages. The same word could be charged with more weight (and thereafter possibly having more influence on the reader) if placed within the title. For example, an article (published in March 2005 in the **Foreign News** section) about a US General making controversial statements about fighting in Iraq appears under the title: *'War is fun' General*. A series of the general's comments are outlined in the article but in the title, *the MN* selects his most controversial one and presents it in a telegraphic manner. As an economical announcement of the topic of an article, titles "have the great advantage, over more extended textual material, of being able to convey their ideological content in a telegraphic manner" (Suleiman, 2013a, p.95). As a paratext, titles frame the main text and influence its reception by the readers since titles are the first, and sometimes only, content in newspapers that readers lay eyes on.

To study the headlines of *the MN*, a sub-corpus containing the titles of all articles across all years was created. Below are the top 50 most frequent words appearing in the titles of all years.

Table 4: Top fifty most frequent words in titles

	Word	Frequency		Word	Frequency
1.	Muslim	699	26.	New	44
2.	Muslims	331	27.	New	43
3.	British	106	28.	First	43
4.	Islamic	104	29.	Police	43
5.	Islam	89	30.	Community	42
6.	US	70	31.	Labour	42
7.	Israeli	66	32.	World	41
8.	Iraq	66	33.	Ramadan	40

9.	mosque	65
10.	Israel	65
11.	Terror	63
12.	school	63
13.	UK	63
14.	war	61
15.	attack	60
16.	Britain	57
17.	Islamophobic	55
18.	police	53
19.	News	47
20.	women	47
21.	Islamophobia	47
22.	schools	46
23.	Pakistan	46
24.	Discrimination	45
25.	religious	45

34.	Id	40
35.	Gaza	40
36.	Blair	39
37.	Wins	39
38.	Elections	37
39.	London	37
40.	Awards	35
41.	Attacks	35
42.	Khan	34
43.	Children	33
44.	Hijab	33
45.	Terrorism	32
46.	Government	32
47.	Palestinian	31
48.	Racist	31
49.	World	30
50.	West	30

Most of the frequent words in this sub-corpus are the same as those found to be the most frequent in the general corpus. Other salient words in the titles sub-corpus, that do not appear in the overall corpus, fall into the identified salient topics (ex. *Mosque* and *Id* can be placed under *Religion*). However, a significant number of the most salient words in this sub-corpus refer to the topic of Violence and Hatred, identified through the keyness analysis as a unique topic in *the MN* compared to other newspapers. The salience of words such as *Islamophobic*, *Islamophobia*, *discrimination* and *racist* in this sub-corpus suggests that *the MN* chooses titles referring to topics that distinguishes it from the mainstream discourse. It also highlights an editorial choice to underscore the topic of Violence and Hatred towards Muslims.

Considering the temptation function of a title – along with the two other functions of designation and description it plays (Genette, 1997, p.93), it is clear that *the MN* deems the topic of Islamophobia, racism and discrimination to be attractive to its readers. With the purpose of enticing readers, persuading them or affecting them, titles also serve a perlocutionary purpose, that is “what we bring about or achieve by saying something” (Austin, Urmson and Sbisà, 1975, p.109). A significant number of titles attempt to alarm the readers on the increase of Islamophobia: *Islamophobia on the increase* (**Editorial**, June 2000 and **Letters**, December 2009), *Perceived threat increased Islamophobia, says report* (**Home News**, June 2006), *School racism and Islamophobia on the increase* (**Home News**, May 2009), *Islamophobia rife in prisons* (**Home News**, August 2000), *Islamophobia increasing* (**Letters**, April 2006). Such a repetition reinforces the perlocutionary value of these alarming titles through cumulation, peaking with the shocking title *Is Islamophobia in Europe leading to another holocaust?* (**Comment**, January 2006). Another recurrence in using *Islamophobia* in titles shows a tendency to frame texts under a call or an effort to stop Islamophobia (e.g. *Calls for measures against Islamophobia*, *Work with us to put a stop to Islamophobia in the media say politicians*, *Campaign lunched to counter Islamophobia*).

Titles can carry strong ideological meanings. They can reveal ideological stances and indicate the effects a newspaper intends to make on its readers. In emphasizing the urgency of dealing with Islamophobia, *the MN* aims to respond to its readers’ ‘horizons of expectations’ (Jauss, 1982, p.22). In fact, several of these titles emerge from the **Letters** section showcasing letters received from the newspaper’s audience and demonstrating their interest in Islamophobia. With its reoccurrence, Islamophobia is further enshrined and reproduced in the readers’ horizons of expectations who become increasingly familiar with this topic, invoked in texts and titles and evoked by the readers in their letters. By expressing what its readers *feel* and *face*, *the MN* sheds the light on Islamophobia and discrimination and highlights these experiences in its titles.

While playing Muslims following some of the trends established by mainstream media, *the MN* chooses to represent them with a diverse big picture: they are not always perpetrators of violence – they are mainly victims of it. Some of them are criminals, but only when they are convicted rather than suspected. Conversely, some of them are victims of hate crimes. They belong to an Ummah, but one that seeks dialogue and peace. They are interested in

international news, but they are concerned the most with news from Home. In this diverse picture, the profile that re-emerges the most (and which *the MN* predominantly chooses to frame stories with) is Islamophobia and discrimination. Stories on injustice and discrimination faced by Muslims draw a counter portrayal to that observed in mainstream press. In the mainstream press discourse, stories about Muslims are consistently framed with reference to conflict and terrorism sustaining the power dynamics of *Islamic Orientalism*, whereby ideas and images circulating in the dominant media discourse emphasize the irrationality and violence of Islam and Muslims in contrast to the modernity and humanism of 'the West'. Contrarily, *the MN* introduces other topics relevant to Muslims, attempting to 'humanize' them by reporting their diverse experiences of suffering from, and witnessing violence. As such, it follows a tendency observed in post-colonial texts, wherein representations produced by societies or communities conceived as Other 'deviate' from established dominant discourses about them to become "the expression of a society no longer conceived as Other but triumphantly self-defining and self-sustaining, able to reorder the conceptual frame within which power is determined" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002, p.114). Indeed, *the MN* seems to engage in a counter discourse that orbits around Muslims' experiences of Islamophobia and discrimination – a 'Muslim penalty'. With subversive manoeuvres, such as its transformation of the association between Islam and extremism, *the MN* discourse shares a characteristic feature with post-colonial literature: its texts are "constituted in counter-discursive rather than homologous practices" (Ibid., p.221). By identifying the constants and changes across all years, the following diachronic analysis will further dissect this counter discourse about a 'Muslim penalty', as discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter Three

### Diachronic Analysis: The Muslim Penalty

In the previous chapter, I have explored the general tendencies and patterns in *the MN* overall corpus. Whilst this maps the salient topics and identifies consistencies, it does not allow for a close examination of the differences and changes in these topics across time. Newspapers' coverage, being consistently dependent on new and evolving stories and events, is inherently dynamic. It is therefore important not to consider the general tendencies and patterns observed over a long period of time and analysed in the previous chapter as sufficiently representative of all the news and views produced by *the MN*. Certain stories and topics could be frequently covered only for a short period of time but their limited presence (in time) could overshadow other stories spanning the twelve-year timeframe for this study. While accounting for more stories and topics – specific to a shorter timeframe (e.g. one year), the diachronic analysis to be applied in this chapter also considers those that are present across the entire time period (twelve years). Furthermore, examining the corpus diachronically permits a better understanding of how the newspaper's coverage develops, and allows the contextualization of the news stories related to prominent political and social events. The diachronic analysis starts with determining the specific key words in sub-corpora containing articles from different time periods. This allows an analysis of consistencies and/or changes in the topics covered by *the Muslim News* over the twelve-year timeframe.

In the study of mainstream press, the corpus was broken to twelve distinct years, grouping articles from January to December of each year. Analysing years separately can determine the stories marking the coverage of the newspaper in a specific year, as compared to other years. However, this overrides the fact that some news stories covering newsworthy events fall within a shorter period of time than a year (few months or even weeks), or extend over more than a year. The yearly division is therefore artificial. Consequently, a yearly break-down of the corpus, rather than a monthly or even a weekly one, can override trends in the news coverage.

A data driven approach would first consider the changes in the number of articles across issues on a yearly or monthly basis, in order to determine moments of quantitative change in the newspaper's content. Table 1 shows the numbers of all articles per year, the proportion

percentage for each year in the total year number (twelve years) and the change percentage which indicates the change from one year to another.

Table 1: Number of articles in *the MN* and their proportion and change percentages

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
number of articles	131	359	298	319	338	340	364	448	526	531	551	568
Proportion %	2.74	7.5	6.2	6.6	7	7.1	7.63	9.3	11	11	11.5	11.9
Change %	-	63.5	-16.9	7	5.9	0.5	7.06	23	17.4	0.95	3.7	3

The table shows that there has been consistent increase in the number of articles published by *the MN* between 2002 and 2009. The absence of six issues in 1998 and two issues in 2000, explained in the methodology, makes it difficult to establish the exact change between 1998 and 2001. The significant increase between 1998 and 1999 is due to the absence of half of the issues in 1998. Similarly, the decrease observed in 2000 could be misleading, as two issues in 2000 are not available.

For the remaining period (2002-2009), the data shows an increase in the number of articles from one year to another, peaking in 2005 (23.08%, in comparison to 2004) and 2006 (17.41, in comparison with 2005). This consistent increase leads to a peak in the number of articles during the last three years (2007-2009) which accounts for over a third of the overall content of the corpus, while representing only a quarter of the timeframe.

Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery find that media interest in Muslims became higher after 9/11, increasing in 2005 after the 7/7 bombings in London and continuing over the following years (2005-2009) “suggesting that this ‘home-grown’ event was of great importance to British media” (2013, p.96). The peak in *the MN* content in 2005 seems to conform to their findings referring to the notable high number of articles on London transport attacks (Ibid., pp.96-97). However, close analysis of the different months in that year suggests otherwise. The following table shows the change percentage in all months in the year 2005.

Table 2: Number of articles in *the MN* and their proportion and change percentages in 2005

Year 2005	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of texts	38	36	40	26	30	45	40	48	29	35	43	38
Proportion %	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.8	1	0.61	0.73	0.9	0.8
Change %	15	-5.2	11.1	-35	15.3	50	-11.1	20	-39.5	20.6	22.8	-11.6

The months when the number of articles increases the most compared to earlier months are June, August, October and November. In fact, the number of articles in July 2005 decreases (in comparison to the previous month) in spite of the introduction of three new sections in that issue related to 7/7: **London 7/7**, **London 7/7 debate on terrorism** and **London 7/7 Islamophobic attacks**. While the first section is generic, the second and third are specific: one deals with terrorism (debate on terrorism) and the other with Islamophobia (Islamophobic attacks). As seen in Chapter Two, *the MN* balances the coverage of terrorism with the coverage of Islamophobic attacks. The collocation observed in Chapter Two between the two words (*Islamophobia* and *terrorism*) seems to culminate here in a ‘collocation’ between sections (**London 7/7 debate on terrorism** and **London 7/7 Islamophobic attacks**).

In contrast to the decrease in July, August is marked by the highest number of articles in 2005 (1.01% of the overall corpus and 10.71% of the 2005 sub-corpus). The decreased content in July 2005 (followed by the high coverage the following month) stands in stark contrast to the increasing mainstream stories on Muslims in July 2005 following the 7/7 attack. It suggests that news stories published by a newspaper for Muslims in the UK (*the MN*) may not be the same stories that are covered in mainstream press about them. However, the similar consistent increase in the number of articles following 2005 between mainstream press and *the MN* indicates a paralleling trend in the two domains.

To understand this, it is useful to look at the news stories produced in August 2005. The month is marked by an increase in two sections: **Home News** (14 articles) and **Islamophobic Attacks** (10 articles). In both sections, almost all stories report fear from or subjection to Islamophobic attacks on places (e.g. *London’s mosque in security scare*, *Islamophobic attack on restaurant* and *Kebab shop abuser pleads guilty*) and people (e.g. *Gang attack on Muslim*



*man, London bombings effect on ordinary Muslims and Islamophobic abuses*). This can support previous findings of *the MN* high interest in Islamophobic attacks on British Muslims. At a time of heightened and antagonistic interest in Muslims in the face of nationwide condemned terrorist attacks by a few Muslims, *the MN* is expected to give high visibility to these attacks if not to follow mainstream trends, then at least to remain politically ‘sensitive’/ ‘correct’. But at a time when alternative positions would be met with controversy, the newspaper sticks to its position, observed earlier, of countering terrorism with Islamophobia.

Despite the similarity in the increase of coverage on Muslims in mainstream press and *the Muslim News* following 7/7, the latter’s increase is influenced by a higher coverage of a series of events engendered by 7/7 (i.e. attacks on Muslims, their businesses and places of worship), rather than 7/7 bombings. This shows a difference in the stories about Muslims that mainstream press considers newsworthy to the general public and the stories considered newsworthy about Muslims to Muslims. While mainstream press was interested in the stories behind the front pages story of the 7/7 bombings, *the MN* left the 7/7 story for the background of a story it deemed more important: the effect of these bombings on Muslims. The 7/7 attacks became relevant only as a background to the emerging central story of Islamophobia as will be shown further below.

## **1. Breaking down the corpus**

Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013) find that the frequency of mainstream articles on Muslims in the UK is heavily influenced by the following key events: the 9/11 attack on the United States (September 2001), the invasion of Iraq (March 2003), the Madrid bombings (March 2004), the London bombings (July 2005), the debate on the veil (October 2006) and the war in Somalia (January 2007). As a yearly break-down of the corpus could dilute trends observed in these periods, *the MN* corpus is analysed diachronically on the basis of separate periods occurring between these milestone events.

The following table indicates these periods, the respective number of articles and the milestone event occurring at the beginning of each time period.

Table 3: Break-down of the corpus

	Period	Event	Number of articles
1	January 1998 to August 2001	Prior to 9/11	1008
2	September 2001 to February 2003	9/11	485
3	March 2003 to February 2004	Iraq War	338
4	March 2004 to June 2005	Madrid	533
5	July 2005 to September 2006	7/7	600
6	October 2006 to Dec 2006	Debate on veil and Danish cartoons	159
7	January 2007 to 2009	Somalia war	1650

Considering the large number of articles in the last two years, and the appearance of *Israel*, *Israeli* and *Palestinian* in the word list of the most frequent words in the overall corpus, the last period is divided into two periods: January 2007 to November 2008 covering the period when the war in Somalia started (1031 articles) and December 2008 to December 2009 marked by the Gaza war (619 articles). Similarly, *Kosovo* and *Chechnya* as keywords in the overall corpus refer to important events occurring in the period prior to 9/11. The pre-9/11 corpus (also containing a larger number of articles than other periods) is therefore broken down to two corpora: January 1998 to July 1999 covering the period of the Kosovo war (344 articles) and August 1999 to August 2001 for the remaining period before 9/11 including the Second Chechen War (664 articles). The overall corpus was therefore broken down to 9 sub-corpora for the diachronic analysis adding two sub-corpora (Chechnya and Gaza) to the seven sub-corpora described in the table above.

However, following the analysis of these separate sub-corpora, some of them revealed insignificant coverage of the events marking these periods (i.e. Chechnya, Madrid and Somalia). It was therefore necessary to change the titles and make them more representative of the coverage in these periods. However, in most cases, these sub-corpora presented stories on several topics making it difficult to single out a topic and choose a representative title. Therefore, unless an event was significantly marking a sub-corpus, the titles were not changed. For example, Gujarat riots were found to be a predominant topic in the 9/11 corpus, hence the change in signposting this period as “9/11 and Gujarat riots”. For the remaining sub-corpora, the original titles (mentioned above) were kept for two reasons: to draw attention to their absence as a remarkable difference between *the MN* and mainstream press

and to avoid confusion considering that other events in these sub-corpora were not representative of the diverse coverage in these periods.

## 2. Keywords analysis of sub-corpora

Each sub-corpus is compared to all other sub-corpora in order to identify the unique aboutness of each period. To limit the analysis, only the first 100 keywords of each period are analysed. Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013) first opted for a selection of 25 keywords per year representing the main news topics. It is not clear, however, on which basis the selection was made. In the study of *the MN*, when analysing the concordances in which the first 100 keywords occur starting with the Kosovo sub-corpus, it was found that most of them refer to people or places of specific news stories that only occur in one or two articles. These keywords (and the stories to which they refer) can therefore have a presence in one or two articles but have insignificant reoccurrence throughout the studied period. As Fairclough states “a single text on its own is quite insignificant: the effects of media power are cumulative” (1989, p.54). Considering the cumulative power of discourse, only keywords transcending more than two articles (appearing in at least 3 articles) were considered for analysis. These keywords are called *key* keywords (as opposed to just keywords) because they are keywords “which are key in a large number of texts” (Scott, 1997, p.237) within the sub-corpus.

Once these key keywords are filtered, they are examined in context by looking at their concordances to investigate the stories or events to which they refer. To determine these stories, the concordances are first sorted by the right or the left word (the following or proceeding word) to the key keyword to examine reoccurrence of the same reference. For example, when sorted by the right word, the key keyword *Sukaina* appears to collocate with *Jaffer*<sup>15</sup> and *Khalfan*<sup>16</sup>. When collocating with these names, the key keyword *Sukaina* refers to a different person and a different story.

As several key keywords tend to refer to the same prevailing story, they are grouped together. The third step of analysis concerns the possible topics shared by the stories indicated by the key keywords. At this stage, it is almost always necessary to expand the concordance to look

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<sup>15</sup> Sukaina Jaffer is the Chairperson of Manchester University's Friends of Palestine. Her name appears in articles about various students' initiatives showing solidarity with Palestine.

<sup>16</sup> Sukaina Khalfan is an eyewitness of 9/11 attacks. Her name appears in articles quoting Muslim eyewitnesses of the attacks.

at the word in context and determine the topic. Most of the events/stories can be categorized into common topics. Instead of using pre-conceived categories, the analysis considers expanding the concordances to determine the topic by exploring ‘the environment’ of the key keyword. This expansion varies from one case to another and depends on “the extent of text which is relevant in the description of an item” (Sinclair, 1966, p.412), or what Sinclair calls ‘the environment of the item’ (Ibid.). In some cases, the analysis reveals an unexpected reference to a story or a topic by a key keyword and its collocations are presented with further analysis. The dates, titles and sections (in bold) where the respective texts containing these collocations appear are also indicated.

The key keywords filtered from the 100 top keywords list for each period are presented below, along with the events and topics to which they refer.

## 2.1. Kosovo (January 1998 to July 1999)

Table 4: Kosovo keywords, events and topics

Key keywords	Story/Event	Topic
<i>SCITT</i>	School-Centred Initial Teacher Training scheme The launch of the Association of Muslim Schools’ School-Centred Initial Teacher Training scheme	Muslim schools in the UK
<i>GM</i>	Grant Maintained Status Muslim Schools being granted GM	
<i>Fatchett</i>	Derek Fatchett (Minister of State for Foreign Affairs) meetings with Muslim leaders	Government’s response to conflicts outside UK: war on Iraq, Israel/Palestine and Yemen detainees
<i>Derek</i>		
<i>Quarrel</i>	Home secretary comments on war on Iraq	
<i>Kosovars</i>	Kosovo war	Conflict and Refugees
<i>Kosovar</i>		
<i>Albania</i>		
<i>Serbians</i>		

<i>Protectorate</i>		
NATO protectorate for Muslims in Kosovo		
<i>Pristina</i>		
<i>Macedonia</i>		
<i>Macedonian</i>		
<i>Nato</i>		
<i>Milosevic</i>		
Serbian President Milosevic Slobodan		
<i>Emin</i>	Sentencing of Greek Mufti of Xanthi, Mehmet Emin Aga	Legal cases
<i>Xanthi</i>		
<i>Khanum</i>	Muslim woman, Farida Khanum winning a hijab case	
<i>Ghalain</i>	Mohsin Ghalain and Malik Nassar Harhra	
<i>Harhra</i>	British detainees in Yemen The case of British Muslims detained in Yemen	
<i>Yacoob</i>		
Yacoob Rashad Lawyer of British Muslims detainees in Yemen		
<i>Rashad</i>		
Yacoob Rashad Lawyer of British Muslims detainees in Yemen		
<i>Monica</i>		
Monica Davis wife of British detainee in Yemen		

<i>Homelessness</i>	Discussing homelessness faced by Muslims in the UK and in Kosovo	Homelessness amongst Muslims
<i>UKACIA</i>	The United Kingdom Action Committee on Islamic Affairs  Screening of film on the life of Prophet Muhammad by Channel 4 TV to which UKACIA has requested changes	Film on Muhammad
<i>Id</i>	Mainly referring to EU regulation enforced for Id al-Adha and animal groups opposing slaughtering	Id regulations

- Government response to conflict outside the UK

The keyness of *Derek Fatchett* could have resulted from obituaries on his death in 1999. However, a close look at the concordances suggests that in most cases, the texts concern several meetings held by the minister with Muslim leaders to discuss the government's response to conflicts affecting Muslims outside and inside the UK (e.g. *British Muslims call on Britain to condemn Israel* (**Home News**, February 1999) and *Plea from British youths in Yemen* (**International News**, March 1999)). In fact, the articles covering these meetings refer to British Muslim leaders voicing their concerns over conflicts outside the UK (attack on Iraq, Palestine/Israel) and the repercussions of these wars on the safety of Muslims in the UK, as in the following extract.

Extract 1:

« They<sup>17</sup> complain about the double standards of Britain and US of not taking any military and economic sanctions against Israel which has weapons of mass destructions [sic.] and has refused to abide by UN resolutions. Mr **Fatchett** said he would convey the concerns to his superiors. Unlike 1991, no major demonstrations have taken place nor any conferences held by the British Muslim leaders. No helpline has been established to help Muslims who will soon be facing harassment and attacks in schools, streets and work places as had happened

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<sup>17</sup> Referring to Muslim leaders and participants in a meeting at the Foreign Office.

during the last Persian Gulf War. » (*Carey refuses to condemn sanctions against Iraq*, **Home News**, February 1998)

This article on Western sanctions on Iraq highlights the position of Muslim leaders expressed at a meeting with the Foreign Office who “urged the Government to resolve the matter peacefully”. They make a link between this foreign policy (sanctions) and what British Muslims face in the UK (harassment and attacks in schools) following their protests against such policies. It draws a comparison with the first Gulf War (1990-1991), when British Muslims (particularly in Bradford) protested against their government’s role in the war. These reported views support the findings outlined in Chapter Two: British Muslims have extra-territorial concerns in what affect Muslims outside the borders of their nation-state. They make newsworthy efforts in using advocacy channels to express these concerns with the ultimate aim of changing government policy.

In other concordances, the discussions between the government and Muslim leaders is portrayed as monologic where the minister reports on the government’s stand on conflicts outside the UK but does not show concern about its effects on British Muslims. In the following extract, the disregard towards Muslim issues is further highlighted by contrasting it to the government’s response to ‘Muslims enemies’.

Extract 2:

« In yet another development, neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Secretary had the time to discuss the most dangerous development of the possible military attack against Iraq. A junior minister, Derek **Fatchett**, invited a selected numbers [sic.] of Muslim leaders and individuals (...), to inform them of the Government stance on the Iraq issue. It seems that the Government, be it Tory or New Labour, treats Muslims and Islam with equal disregard. They only have time for those who are against Islam and Muslims. More recently, Tony Blair congratulated the Israelis on the anniversary of Israel’s creation. He did not utter even one word about the millions of displaced Palestinians. » (*More evidence that the Government has no respect for Islam*, **Editorial**, February 1998)

While contrasting the government’s reaction to Muslims’ concerns and its congratulations to Israelis, extract 2, from *the MN* editorial, refers to Israelis as “those who are against Islam and Muslims”. A second contrast between the government’s message to the Israelis and lack of message to/about Palestinians positions the government as a supporter of Israel and an opponent of the Palestinians, Muslims and Islam.

The government seems to be portrayed in opposition to Muslims, either through disregard for their concerns (as in extract 2) or through disrespect and insensitivity as highlighted in three articles containing another key keyword, *Id*, as in the following extract.

Extract 3:

« The Muslim community has condemned the insensitivity shown by the House of Commons by supplying Muslims with ham sandwiches during the celebration of Id al-Fitr on February 5. » (*Muslims hamstrung by the House of Commons*, **Home News**, February 1998)

Stories about the government's controversial policies and positions did not only emerge from key keywords referring to the minister or to Eid celebrations. When looking up the key keyword *quarrel* in the corpus, it was rarely found in the texts categorized under legal cases (referring for example to disputes leading to criminal offence). Out of the ten concordances where this word appears, seven of them refer to quotes from speeches by or interviews with political leaders (Tony Blair, William Hague and Jack Straw). In order to examine possible tendencies in the use of a word, the concordances are sorted by the first word preceding the node word (i.e. *quarrel*) and the first word following it to observe possible patterns.

Concordance: *quarrel* in Kosovo sub-corpus

File ID	Concordance
file5377658	Straw emphasised that Britain and US had “no <b>quarrel</b> with the people of Iraq”. General Secretary
file5377719	But let me add something else. We have no <b>quarrel</b> at all with the Iraqi people and have,
file5377696	same as what we were saying about Iraq, our <b>quarrel</b> is not with the people of Iraq, not with
file5377660	what I want to make absolutely clear. Our <b>quarrel</b> is with Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi regime
file5377696	religion, it is with a brutal dictator. Our <b>quarrel</b> is not with the religion or with the country
file5377696	peace, means we have to be really tough. Our <b>quarrel</b> is not with the people of Iraq at all,
file5377687	suffering is caused by Saddam Hussain. And our <b>quarrel</b> is very much with him. Islam is not the

A linguistic pattern emerges in these concordances with the use of repetitive disclaimers rhetorically structured as follows “*our* (Britain, or Britain and US) *quarrel is not with* (mainly people of Iraq, or Islam/religion). *It is with* (Saddam Hussein)”. Van Dijk categorizes disclaimers as a possible expression of ideology in discourse that is used to deny our bad things (2006, p.125). The necessity to negate Britain's and US's quarrel with Iraqis suggests that such a quarrel can be present, perceived or contested, and therefore should be negated. Its



negation is further emphasized with repetition. The repeated denial by the UK and the US that the quarrel over Iraq is not with the Iraqis but with Saddam can only be necessary because of the existence of a counter position that the quarrel is with the Iraqis, contrary to what the British and the Americans say. The insistence on this by the UK and the US may therefore be interpreted as an act of contestation and rebuttal.

- Kosovo war and refugees

*The MN* coverage of Kosovo war orbits around the issue of refugees. In more than two thirds of the concordances containing the word *Kosovar*, the word *refugees* appears as the immediate collocate (the next word on the right). This interest in Kosovar refugees also appears in concordances of other key keywords, such as *Albania*, *Macedonia* and *Montenegro*, as most of their concordances refer to Kosovar refugees in these countries as in the following random concordances containing *Kosovar* or *Kosovars*.

Extract 4:

« **Kosovar** refugees in Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania are to benefit from over 2.25 million worth of aid that has been allocated by two British Muslim charities: Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. » (*Kosovars receive help from British charities*, **Debating Muslim News**, April 1999)

Extract 5:

« At some stage Nato will send ground troops to create a “protectorate” for the **Kosovars** . A protectorate does not mean independence. Rather, yet another Muslim refugee camp population permanently dependant on the West for its protection and livelihood (the Serbian thugs, will be left with enough capability to slaughter defenceless Muslim refugees). The second Nato objective therefore coincides with that of the Serbs – the elimination of any semblance of Muslim power at the heart of Europe. The only difference is one of method. The Serbs choose concentration camps and the elimination of Muslims. The West prefers to put Muslims in refugee camps or reservations (like the Red Indians or Aborigines), permanently helpless, powerless and dependent on the good will of the West. The remainder of their culture and faith being eroded, to be studied by historians and anthropologists. This is apparent in their insistence on referring to the Muslim **Kosovars** as “ethnic Albanians”. The media have also learnt lessons from Bosnia. Reference to Muslims is minimal. They no longer show destroyed mosques, or funeral scenes, or Muslims at prayer. » (*Serbia and the Third Reich*, **A big issue**, April 1999)

The expanded concordance refers to Kosovo's conflict and the refugees. It frames the imposed refugee status of the Kosovars to be not as a result of the war, but rather as a problem masquerading as a solution that permits an underlying project to persist. This project is implied by *the MN* through the project's objective, a "common objective for Serbs and the Nato": "the elimination of any semblance of Muslim power at the heart of Europe". The problematisation of the Kosovars' refugee status is further emphasized with a sense of a conspiracy against Muslims by *Serbs, the West* and *the media*. However, although locating these Muslims "at the heart of Europe", the text discursively positions them outside *the West* as they become an object of study by "historians and anthropologists" and "dependent on the good will of the West".

This discursive position stems from the potential change of Kosovars' place, from Muslim Europeans seeking independence to refugees in camps inside Europe. This 'displacement' is not only in physical space, but also in power. By drawing comparisons to "Aboriginals" reserves whose separating placement limited their access to resources (hence disadvantaging them), *the MN* implies that Muslims will be disempowered and dispossessed. The editorial warns against Muslims' potential transformation from a "power at the heart of Europe" to disempowered refugees, who are "permanently dependant on the West". It suggests that by becoming refugees in Europe, Kosovars are dislocated from Europe (a change from Europeans to refugees).

Hence, the refugee story is no longer a story about the consequences or development of the conflict; rather it is framed as that of a continuous disguised and underlying conflict or tension between *the West* and *Muslims*, particularly regarding the response of Britain and other Western countries to the wars and conflicts facing Muslims. In fact, stories about Iraq, Israel/Palestine and Serbia are linked in editorials criticizing Britain's response to (and role in) them. Reporting on Tony Blair's promise to ensure the return of Kosovar refugees to their homes, *the MN* editorial in May 1999 draws several comparisons between them and Palestinian refugees. The editorial also contrasts the response to Iraqi victims and that to Serbian victims in Kosovo.

Extract 6:

« We hope the Prime Minister will be true to his word and we will not have the situation we have in Palestine where over 3 million refugees are unable to return to their homes and are not catered for in the Oslo Agreement. » (*Nato vacillates on Milosevic*, **Editorial**, May 1999)

The editorial proceeds to contrast the different political and media responses to these conflicts stating that “the West was rarely rueful in the case of Iraq. Many cases of civilian attacks in the Gulf War were blamed on Iraq. The media is full of sympathetic human stories of Serbian civilians”. It carries on to state that “Nato regularly apologises for the Serbian civilian casualties” (that fell victims of Nato’s bombing of Serbia). The contrast between the *rare* regret of the Iraq war and the *full* sympathy and regular apologies to Serbians is further highlighted by comparing the few media articles criticizing the Iraq war to the hundred ones on Serbia.

Extract 7:

« There were very few articles criticising Government policy or the way the war being conducted in the case of Iraq, but in the Serbian situation, hundreds of articles are published criticising Blair and the bombing of Serbia. » (*Nato vacillates on Milosevic*, **Editorial**, May 1999)

The comparison of victims of both wars intersect at the conclusion of the editorial referring to the responsibility of Britain and Nato in the difference of casualties.

Extract 8:

« Nato is ultra-careful in ensuring that civilian (‘collateral’) damage is kept to a minimum in Yugoslavia, whilst this was not the case in Iraq. » (*Nato vacillates on Milosevic*, **Editorial**, May 1999)

The extracts above show an extensive use of adverbial and number modifiers (e.g. *rarely*, *hundreds*, *few*, *ultra*, *minimum*) which serve to accentuate the contrast between the two governmental stances (with regards to the war on Iraq and the bombing of Serbia) and alludes to the hypocrisy of the British government in dealing with Muslims inside and outside the UK.

Other editorials in this sub-corpus point out the hypocrisy of British foreign policy drawing parallels between situations involving Muslims and non-Muslims and highlighting the difference of governmental responses to them. In *Iraq crisis – smell of hypocrisy* (February 1998), the editorial describes the government’s policy towards Iraq as “folly”, dictated (“following Washington’s dictates”), unclear (“lack of clarity”). The editorial continues to

highlight the “double standards” and “hypocrisy” of Britain in time (historically) and space (regionally). Historically, it first points to the contrast between Western foreign policies in Iraq when Saddam Hussein was considered “a hero of the west” (following the Iranian Revolution) and the Western attacks on his regime during the post-Gulf War period. The editorial also refers to the hypocrisy of Britain in condemning Hussein’s use of chemical weapons against Iraqis by bringing up “the fact that Britain itself used chemical weapons against the Iraqis back in the 1930s”. A third argument presented to underline the double standards is the difference between the UK’s response to crimes committed by the Iraqi regime and those committed by Israel (“the double standards shown compared with Israeli crimes”, “the selective policy towards Israel”). In fact, criticizing Britain’s policies as hypocritical is not limited to its foreign policy towards non-Muslim and Muslim majority countries. The criticism extends to Britain’s response to British Muslims detainees. In the editorial *FCO’s double standards*, the *MN* discusses the UK’s response to the trial of British Muslim detainees in Yemen, suggesting that their religion is the reason behind the government’s inaction to ensure a fair trial. It points to the case of Jewish (non-British) detainees in Iran and Britain’s support to them as an example of such double standards. As observed in the extract below, *the MN* questions the consistency of the government’s responses to British Muslims detainees and non-British detainees from other faiths.

Extract 9:

« Does our Government have two standards – one for Muslims and one for other faiths? In the Yemeni case, those arrested are British citizens. They happen to be Muslims. In the Iranian case, those arrested are Jews. They are not British citizens. The latter do matter, it seems. Muslims do not. » (*FCO’s double standards*, **Editorial**, July 1999)

Editorials, as opinionated argumentative texts, are charged with newspaper’s views and interpretations of events. *The MN* use of editorials to reveal dichotomies, criticize policies and deconstruct frames of representation is not uncommon as shall be discussed later in this chapter.

## 2.2. Chechnya (August 1999 to August 2001)

Table 5: Chechnya keywords, events and topics

<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Story/Event</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<i>Gapes</i>	Mike Gapes  The campaign by the Association of Ilford Muslims against Labour MP for Ilford, Mike Gapes, prior to elections	UK General Elections
<i>VoteSmart</i>	The launch of VoteSmart, a website advising Muslims about elections candidates and its role in campaigning against Gapes	
<i>AIM</i>	Association of Ilford Muslims  The campaign of the Association of Ilford Muslims against Gapes	
<i>Result</i>	Elections results	
<i>Khalifah</i>	Debate on accountability in Khilafah vs democracy during elections	
<i>Shafique</i>	Referring to different people, all Muslim candidates in elections:  - Mohammad Shafique - Shafique Hussein - Chaudhry Shafique	
<i>Skinner</i>	Dr Abdul Rasjid Skinner  Muslim candidate in elections	
<i>Godsiff</i>	Roger Godsiff  Muslim candidate in elections	

<i>CS</i>	Referring to two things: 1. CS gas supplied by the UK and used by Israeli authorities to control Palestinian riots in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Intifada 2. <i>The MN</i> interview with Clare Short, Labour Party MP	Second Intifada
<i>Tanzim</i>	Tanzim Wasti Muslim Council of Britain spokesman's comments on conflicts outside UK, two thirds of which concern the Intifada	
<i>Alawiye</i>	Zainab Alawiye Referring mainly to quotes by Zainab Alawiye, the mother of two talented Muslim children excelled in their education	Education
<i>al-Hijrah</i>	Al-Hijrah school, the first state funded Muslim coeducational school	
<i>Sonyel</i>	Dr Salah Ramadan Sonyel Debate on Dr Salah Ramadan Sonyel's view on Turkish denial of Armenian genocides	Armenians/ Muslims genocides
<i>Anatolia</i>	Ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Europe	
<i>Armenians</i>	Debate on responses to Armenians genocide as opposed to Muslims massacres	
<i>Ur</i>	Imam Shafiq ur Rehman The case of Imam facing deportation from Britain	Legal cases: Imam case and Bhatti murder case
<i>Tayyaba</i>	Lashkar Tayyaba The case of Kashmiri force fighting in Kashmir, allegedly sponsored by Imam Rehman, raising debate on national security and terrorism bill	
<i>LT</i> Lashkar Tayyaba		

<i>Bhatti</i>	<p>Abdul Bhatti</p> <p>Referring to few people such as Iqbal Bhatti, Secretary of Jamiah Mosque, and his comments on Rehman case and also to the case of Abdul Bhatti who was gang murdered in London</p>	
<i>Ouseley</i>	<p>Herman Ouseley</p> <p>Herman Ouseley, chair and chief executive in the Commission for Racial Equality. The commission's report and its repercussions on the denial of Islamophobia</p>	Racial and faith equality
<i>Weatherill</i>	<p>Bernard Weatherill</p> <p>Lord Weatherill's role on the amendments of The Private Members Bill on 2001 census and being awarded the Annual Three Faiths Forum Award</p>	
IAS	<p>The Sylhet Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) in Bangladesh,</p> <p>A charity-based organisation assisting Bengali applicants with requests for visa's or settlement in the UK.</p>	Immigration
<i>Zamfara</i>	The introduction of Islamic penal law in the northern state of Zamfara in Nigeria in March 2000.	Sharia'a in Nigeria
<i>Mujahidin</i>	<p>Referring to three groups of Mujahidin in stories about conflict:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harakat Mujahidin in Kashmir</li> <li>- Afghan Mujahidin</li> <li>- Chechen Mujahidin</li> </ul>	Conflict
<i>Hain</i>	<p>Peter Hain</p> <p>Interviews and meetings with Peter Hain, Foreign Office Minister on Israel/Palestine, peace in Sudan and Iraq sanctions</p>	UK foreign policy
<i>Arranges</i>	Verb used in different contexts	

<i>Heterosexual</i>	Debate on homosexual marriage and treating it equally to heterosexual marriage	Sexuality
<i>Lottery</i>	Debate on Lottery funding to charities	Charity

It is worth noting that in a sub-corpus containing articles published from the start of the Second Chechen war, the reference to it is minimal with only one key keyword: *Mujahidin*. However, Chechnya appears as a keyword in the overall corpus, hence the signposting of this sub-corpus under Chechnya as a significant milestone. This said, the analysis of all key keywords within this sub-corpus shows *the MN* interest in various other international and national events, making each story unrepresentative of the period on its own.

- UK General Elections and Intifada

The coverage of the elections is unsurprisingly focused on Muslim candidates. However, three of the eight key keywords referring to this topic concern Muslims' campaign against Mike Gapes, MP for Ilford South, in which Muslims represent a fifth of the population (Office for National Statistics, 2001). However, the names of other MPs representing areas with a higher Muslim population do not appear within the keywords list. The interest in Mike Gapes could have been the result of other factors. These can be revealed when analysing the concordances. In a random sample of nine concordances, four of them highlight his connection to Israel by referring to him as the deputy chair of Labour Friends of Israel or pointing to his support of Zionist lobbies as expressed in the extracts below.

Extract 10:

« As reported in The Muslim News, activists have taken the 'VoteSmart' initiative a step further by challenging sitting Labour MP Mike **Gapes**, the deputy chair of Labour Friends of Israel, about his stance towards Muslim countries. Further campaigns are planned to make politicians seeking election to be accountable for their record. For far too long, the majority of the Muslim community has remained silent and inactive, but now we have the opportunity to end their apathy in the forthcoming General Election. » (*The art of lobbying*, **Editorial**, March 2001)



Extract 11:

« The findings, however, were stunning. They revealed that **Gapes**, who had always been the recipient of the lion's share of votes from Ilford's Muslims had a lengthy record of anti-Muslim statements and had been a consistent parliamentary apologist for the Israeli government. » (*Lobbying experience in Ilford South*, **Top Stories**, June 2001)

The prominence of this story in the coverage of the UK general elections suggests that Muslims' voting choices can depend to a large extent on the candidates' stances towards Muslim countries, particularly Palestine. This is supported by the keyness of *VoteSmart*, a website advising Muslims about UK General Elections candidates and revealing their positions towards Muslims outside the UK. The website is even presented as the result of British Muslims' concerns for Palestinians in the following title of an article in the **Home News** section: *Empathy for Palestinians produces Votesmart* (**Home News**, May 2001). British Muslims' support of Palestinians and interest in the Israel/Palestine conflict is also highlighted in another set of home stories related to Tanzim Wasti, Muslim Council of Britain's spokesman, whose comments on Intifada are the subject of two thirds of the concordances in which his name, as a key keyword, appears. Out of the eight concordances of *Tanzim*, six relate to his comments on demonstrations by British Muslims supporting Palestinians during the Second Intifada<sup>18</sup>.

The division between home news covering British Muslims (their campaigns, their demonstrations and their candidates in the UK elections) and international news (focusing on Palestinian Intifada) becomes artificial as the concerns and actions of British Muslims that are reported by *the MN* are tied to the issues affecting Muslims outside the UK. This is reinforced by the prominence of interviews with Peter Hain (whose name appears as a key keyword) on the UK foreign policy in countries with a Muslim majority (Palestine, Sudan and Iraq).

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<sup>18</sup> British Muslims organized protests in 2000 in support of Palestinians during the Second Intifada that started in September 2000.

### 2.3. 9/11 and Gujarat riots (September 2001 to February 2003)

Table 6: 9/11 keywords, events and topics

Keywords	Story/Event	Topic
<i>VHP</i>	The Vishva Hindu Parishad organisation The Vishva Hindu Parishad's (Hindu nationalist organisation) anti-Muslim sentiments and action in Gujarat	2002 Gujarat riots
<i>Rs</i>	Indian Rupee symbol Several stories but mainly on the economic costs of Gujarat riots	
<i>RSS</i>	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh organisation's anti-muslim sentiments and action in Gujarat	
<i>Godhra</i>	Godhra train burning event leading to Gujarat riots	
<i>Sena</i>	Shiv Sina party's anti-Muslim calls	
<i>Sukaina</i>	Sukaina Khalfan Muslim eyewitness of 9/11	9/11
<i>Towers</i>	Twin towers attacked on 9/11	
<i>Usama</i>	Usama Ben Ladin	
<i>anti-Americanism</i>	In Middle Eastern countries following post 9/11 policies and war on Afghanistan	
<i>co-workers</i>	Muslims talking about their co-workers in 9/11 attacks or their post 9/11 interactions with their co-workers	
<i>Sukaina</i>	Sukaina Jaffer Chairperson of Manchester University's Friends of Palestine	Second Intifada
<i>Jenin</i>	Battle of Jenin April 2002	

<i>Plebiscite</i>	Demand for plebiscite under UN auspices to determine whether the people of Kashmir should opt for Pakistan or India.	2002 Kashmir elections
<i>Correspondents</i>	Referring to media reports and correspondents comments on Muslims in other media outlets	Media interest in Islam and Muslims
<i>Season</i>	<i>BBC</i> Season on Islam	
Sameel	Campaign led by Sameel to encourage British Muslims to offer blood	Charity
<i>Huntington</i>	Samuel Huntington, author of <i>The Clash of civilizations</i>	Debate on cultural dialogue
<i>VITA</i>	Launch of Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts Department	Islamic Art
<i>Burka</i>	Debate on Burka	Burka
<i>Filkin</i>	Geoffrey Filkin  Minister for Race and Community relations	Comments on Islam and visits to Muslims events

- 9/11 and Gujarat riots

This sub-corpus is clearly marked by two major events: 9/11 and Gujarat riots. In British mainstream press, while 9/11 appears as a key event influencing the portrayal of Muslims, the Gujarat riots do not appear as significant when reporting about Muslims. The presence of the latter in this sub-corpus indicates *the MN* unique interest in this event. The Gujarat riots were marked by the anti-Muslims pogrom. Following the killing of Hindu pilgrims by Muslims burning a train in Godhra (India), communal riots and violence against Muslims resulted in the massacre of 800 Muslims and the rise of anti-Muslim discourse and actions (e.g. attacks, rape, dismissal from work).

The two major events referred to by half of the keywords (9/11 and Gujarat riots) occurred in different years and are not connected. However, a shared pattern in the coverage of these two events emerges. The keyness of words such as *VHP*, *RSS* and *anti-Americanism* and the analysis of their concordances indicate *the MN*'s interest in focusing on the effects of these separate events on Muslims and criticizing the Hindu Nationalist organisations for targeting Muslims. Ghassem-Fachandi shows that the responses from political leaders and media in India to the Godhra train incident was very similar to the American response to 9/11, with both attacks (attack on twin towers and the burning of a train in Godhra) being defined as terrorist attacks "on the whole world". He shows that such responses helped justify the pogrom and the anti-Muslim actions that followed these events as legitimate reactions to terrorism (Ghassem-Fachandi, 2012, p.62).

The Gujarat riots seemed to trigger a significant change in the number of articles published by *the MN* in February 2002 (the month the riots started). An increase of almost 90% is witnessed. In contrast, a decrease in the number of articles is observed in September 2001 (when 9/11 was reported). However, when looking into the articles published in February 2002, none of them refers to the Gujarat riots (as the riots started on February 27<sup>th</sup>, their coverage took place in the following months). So, what factors explain the sharp increase in the number of articles published in February 2002?

Table 7: Changes in the number of articles before and after the Gujarat riots

Year	2001					2002	
Month	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Number of articles	28	26	25	24	24	18	34
Change percentage %	-3.45	-7.14	-3.85	-4	0	-25	88.8

An examination of the data shows that the striking increase is due to the multiplication of articles appearing under the **Home News** section, which contains eighteen articles in February, compared to only seven articles in January 2002. Over half of these articles focus on stories of Islamophobic attacks in the UK, discrimination and threats faced by Muslims as well as the neglect of their complaints by the police. The stories cover attacks on people (Muslims) and places (mosques) representing them as victims of individual attacks as well as institutional discrimination and neglect.

Although both 9/11 and the Gujarat riots were newsworthy, the **Home News** stories covering Muslims as victims of Islamophobia and discrimination are what led to a significant increase in the articles. In contrast, 9/11 did not seem to stimulate an increase in *the MN* content, contradictory to mainstream press, where the event sparked a sharp increase in articles on the story and on Muslims in general. The newsworthiness of Muslims in *the MN* seems to be more determined by their victimhood. In the stories about Gujarat, Muslims are more commonly framed as patients rather than agents (or their agency is hedged), as illustrated in the extracts below.

Extract 12:

« Following in the footsteps of Nazi Germany where Jews were made out to be the cause of all ills afflicting Germans, so the **RSS/ VHP** point to the minorities, particularly Muslims. »  
(*Gujaratis live in a segregated society*, **International News**, April 2002)

Extract 13:

« The **BJP/VHP** until now had been blaming the Muslims and the Pakistani intelligence agency ISI for the **Godhra** carnage, but the Report now points the accusatory finger in the direction of the **VHP** themselves, who used it to trigger a pre-planned anti-Muslim pogrom. »  
(*Who lit the fire that sparked anti Muslim pogrom in Gujarat*, **Top stories**, July 2002)

Extract 14:

« There has been little or no evidence to prove that those who burnt the carriage were indeed Muslims. Instead eyewitnesses have said that some karsevaks had got into a fight with stall owners at **Godhra** station when they stole and snatched food and other items from the various stalls and refused to pay. The fight led to the burning of the carriage. Instead of finding those really responsible for the heinous crime, the **VHP** used the incident as an excuse to murder innocent Muslims throughout the state. » (*Pogrom against Muslims in Gujarat leaves 1000 dead*, **Top stories**, March 2002)

The articles about Gujarat mainly report on the violence against Muslims, the anti-Muslims sentiments expressed by political figures and the damages occurring in the aftermath of the riots (hatred, dismissal from work, continuous attacks) from which Muslims suffer. Unlike 9/11, the Gujarat riots provide a story where Muslims are victims of violence, not perpetrators.

While 9/11 did not monopolize the stories in *the MN* during this period, the prominence of the keywords *correspondents* and *season* reinforces findings concerning the increase in the mainstream media interest in Muslims post 9/11 (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.96). *Correspondents* appears in articles quoting and discussing reports on Muslims in other media outlets, and *season* is found to refer to the *BBC 2* ‘Islam UK’ season which was broadcast in 2001 to reflect the lives of Muslims in the UK. It is also at this time that a debate on cultural dialogue started to develop in *the MN* with a recurrent reference to Huntington’s clash of civilisations with the keyness of *Huntington*. The theory is referenced and debated in seven articles in this period across various sections (**Editorial, Book Review, Letters, Home News and Top Stories**). Indeed, the effect of 9/11 on the mainstream antagonistic perceptions between ‘the West’ and Muslims (inside and outside ‘Western’ countries) have been so significant that we can speak about a pre-9/11 era and a post 9/11 era.

#### 2.4. Iraq (March 2003 to February 2004)

Table 8: Iraq keywords, events and topics

Keywords	Story/Event	Topic
<i>MacShane</i>	Denis MacShane Minister for Europe’s controversial Islamophobic comments and Muslims’ demand for his resignation	Islamophobia
<i>Motala</i>	Shaykh Motala Shaykh Motala’s detention in Heathrow airport	
<i>Spooks</i>	Islamophobic episode of Spooks, a fictional drama with caricatures of imams, Muslim students and mosques	
<i>GB</i>	Guantanamo Bay	Guantanamo
<i>Rhuhel</i>	Rhuhel Ahmed Guantanamo Bay captive	
<i>Captives</i>	Guantanamo Bay captives	

<i>Azmat</i>	Azmat Begg Begg, father of Guantanamo captive, Moazzam Begg	
<i>Hoon</i>	Geoff Hoon Defense Secretary's comments on the use of cluster bombs in Iraq	Iraq
<i>Suffolk</i>	Muslim Royal Air Forces reservist from Suffolk who was absent when called up for the war against Iraq	
<i>Baqir</i>	Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al Hakim Assassination of Iraqi Shia cleric	
<i>Bulldozer</i>	Rachel Corrie, who was run over by an Israeli army bulldozer	Palestine/Israel
<i>Brute</i>	Protesting students subjected to brute force in Kashmir	Kashmir protests
<i>Hindutva</i>	Hindu nationalism in India and its anti-Muslim agenda	
<i>Exhibition</i>	Islamic Experience Exhibition launch	Islamic art
<i>Experience</i>		
<i>Shiban</i>	Shiban Akba Her publications and appointment as a director of Muslim centre	
<i>Izetbegovic</i>	Alija Izetbegovic Death of Alija Izetbegovic, former President of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the publication of his autobiography	
<i>Granada</i>	Inauguration of the Mosque of Granada in Spain	

- Islamophobia

One of the most frequent keywords in this sub-corpus is *MacShane*<sup>19</sup>. All 15 concordances containing it discuss his controversial call to Muslims to choose between the British way or the way of terrorists. Some of the concordances suggested this call facilitates other Islamophobic comments, as in the following extract.

Extract 15:

« Their response<sup>20</sup> contrasts with the behaviour of Minister for Europe, Denis **MacShane** , in calling on Muslims to choose between the “British way” and the “way of terrorists.” His refusal to retract his Islamophobic outburst paved the way for Jewish Labour MP, Louise Ellman, to abuse Parliamentary privilege when she venomously claimed that the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) supports terrorism. » (*Response and irresponsibility, Editorial*, January 2004)

All the articles referencing Denis MacShane clearly condemn his comments, accuse them of inflaming Islamophobic reactions to British Muslims and report on the Muslims’ outrage and their calls for MacShane’s resignation. In the article *Muslims seek MacShane’s resignation for Islamophobic outburst* (**Top Stories**, December 2003), *the MN* criticizes the Minister’s comments for causing “fears and anxieties”, “offence and hurt” to Muslims and leaving “such a bad taste”. Other articles refer to the speech as a “controversial call”, an “Islamophobic outburst” and as “offensive”. *The MN* condemnation of Islamophobic comments are consistent with its coverage of stories from which *Spooks* and Shaykh *Motala* emerge as key keywords. In reporting about the *BBC* TV programme *Spooks*<sup>21</sup>, it warns that the series “will bring about acts of violence against the Muslim community, incite hatred, endanger lives and tarnish the image of mosques” (*BBC accused of inciting attacks against Muslims, Home News*, June 2003). Another article reported British Muslims’ complaining about the programme as “Islamophobic, containing offensive racial stereotypes and likely to incite violence and hatred.” This follows a report about an Islamophobic attack in Birmingham in which the perpetrators referred to the TV programme during the attack (*Spooks exonerated of*

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<sup>19</sup> Referring to Denis MacShane, Minister for Europe, who called for Muslims to choose between the British way or the way of terrorists.

<sup>20</sup> Referring to the response of the Home Office Minister and the Foreign Office Minister to the Hijab ban in France.

<sup>21</sup> A fictional television drama series aired on BBC (starting from May 2002). In one episode, it depicts an Imam at Birmingham encouraging suicide bombings, as well as British Muslim students torturing an MI5 agent.



*Islamophobic incitement*, **Home News**, August 2003). *The MN* condemnation is echoed by readers' letters. One of the letters (*Spook to the Spooks*, **Letters**, June 2003) accuses the programme of "demonising" Muslims and inciting "religious hatred". Letters by readers also highlighted the detention of Shaykh Motala as Islamophobic.

- Iraq and Guantanamo

Unlike mainstream press, the Iraq war is consistently framed in *the MN* as unjustified with emphasis on its effect in alienating British Muslims. In mainstream press, the reference to the war on Iraq and its contribution to radicalisation is found to be related to a 'grievance culture' (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.226). The war on Iraq is considered to be used by Muslims as a 'convenient excuse' for violence (Ibid.). In contrast, *the MN* often questions the political justification of the war and its morality and connects it to a "general feeling of helplessness amongst local Muslims" (*Thousands protest against Iraqi bombing in East Ham*, **Iraq**, April 2003). Articles on the war on Iraq challenge its justification. They describe the war and its motifs with words such as "contradiction" and "failure". It is also typical to describe victims as "innocent" in these articles, pointing out the UK failure in finding weapons and its killing of innocent people, as in the following extracts.

Extract 16:

« The continuing controversy has already led to the Prime Minister and his Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, insisting that they were not aware before the war that the discredited 45 minutes threat from Saddam Hussein<sup>22</sup> referred only to battlefield munitions. This contradicted the position of **Hoon** and even former House of Commons Leader, Robin Cook, admitting that they did know<sup>23</sup>. Following the acknowledged failure to find any weapons of mass destruction, Blair has followed the example of US President, George W Bush, in setting up a fresh inquiry into the use and quality of intelligence. » (*Hutton Report a white wash Shooting the messenger*, **Home News**, February 2004)

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<sup>22</sup> Used as a claim to justify the war on Iraq, secret information passed to British intelligence warned that Saddam Hussein can deploy Weapons of Mass Destruction against his enemies in less than 45 minutes.

<sup>23</sup> Hoon stated that he knew the report referred to battlefield weapons only.

Extract 17:

« He<sup>24</sup> was arrested and charged with going absent without leave from his RAF<sup>25</sup> base in **Suffolk**. He is not the only person to have refused to serve in Iraq. Two other British servicemen, a private and an air technician from 16 Air Assault Brigade, were sent home from the Gulf after refusing to fight. But neither will be disciplined. The soldiers also questioned the morality of a war in which innocent civilians would be killed. » (*Muslim war dodger did not protest, says MoD*, **Home News**, June 2003)

In extract 17, the article clarifies that the position of the Muslim RAF reservist is not exceptional. It refers to two other servicemen “refusing to fight”. The reference is employed to point out the similarity in their position to Khan’s refusal to fight as well as the difference in the reaction to their respective stands. While the other British servicemen’s position was respected, the Muslim serviceman was punished. Muslim or not, *the MN* reports that some British soldiers question the morality of the war. Reporting on the opposition of military representatives to the war is significant in conveying a contestation of the war’s motives and legitimacy. The contestation is further emphasized with the portrayal of war victims as “innocent civilians”. The use of this redundant description (“innocent” and “civilians”) is not arbitrary. As Moeller states, the phrase “innocent civilians” has become normative post 9/11, due to a new and “larger recognition that innocence is conferred, rather than inherent” (2004, p.65). The war on terrorism has had an effect on news reporting during wartime – it became necessary to proclaim the ‘innocence’ of ‘civilians’ when reporting on civilian victims of war. Such an affirmation (innocent civilians) is discursively significant as it gives a moral high ground to the victims. In extract 17, the affirmation allows *the MN* to implicitly advance a moral judgment: it permits it to extend the ‘innocence’ of victims to the Muslim soldier (Moshin Khan) – by refusing to kill *innocent civilians* (like other servicemen did), Khan would be innocent and hence should not be punished.

Another topic that dominates this period is Guantanamo Bay. *Guantanamo* is one of the top keywords in *the MN* overall corpus, with the newspaper’s interest peaking during this time period. In the multiple stories of Guantanamo Bay detainees (26 articles in this sub-corpus), the names with a high presence relate to British captives. The focus of the articles is on their health, torture and lack of human rights, with calls for their transfer to the UK or subjecting

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<sup>24</sup> Referring to Moshin Khan, a Muslim RAF reservist from Suffolk, who refused to turn up for duty when he was called up for the war against Iraq.

<sup>25</sup> Referring to the Royal Air Force.

them to a fair and free trial. The criticism of their treatments and calls for fair trial often appear as quotations from figures of authority (e.g. a group of European Parliament members, Secretary General of the MCB, the International Committee of Red Cross). Most concordances containing the word *captives* show alarming and contesting descriptions of the detainees' situation within the five words span as seen below (*endangering, confined, illegally, unlawful*).

#### Concordance : *captives* in Iraq sub-corpus

File ID	Concordance
file537748	tribunal set up especially for Guantanamo Bay <b>captives</b> . The detainees would not have direct access to
file537737	the names, ages and country of origin of the GB <b>captives</b> and how they were captured. Britain shoulder to
file537735	, 23, North London. Endangering health of <b>captives</b> at Guantanamo Bay Confined in temperatures of
file537736	and help get justice for my son and the other <b>captives</b> , but the Muslims seem to stay away. I gave out 5
file537736	to a POW. Under these provisions it is clear that <b>captives</b> in Guantanamo are either POWs or civilians
file537735	of Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva for a list of the <b>captives</b> at Guantanamo Bay as they and the US Government
file537737	, we are highlihgtng the plight of the <b>captives</b> , all Muslim, held illegally by the US at
file537736	detained at Guantanamo Bay. 4) Write to the <b>captives</b> of Gunatanamo Bay To write to any of the captives
file537735	Without any regard for the mental state of their <b>captives</b> , one of the prisoners who attempted suicide was
file537736	for this unlawful imprisonment of these <b>captives</b> (which includes children) in cage like cells

Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery found that *Guantanamo Bay* appears in mainstream press with reference to British detainees, described as “devout Muslims” (2013, p.171). *The MN* portrays them differently: the top frequent adjective in all the articles about Guantanamo Bay is *British*, and *children* appears as the fourth most frequent noun describing the captives after *detainees*, *prisoners* and *men*. As with the affirmation of innocence of the Iraqi civilians, the emphasis on children is not arbitrary. The ‘sacred status’ of children (Zelizer, 1985, pp.209-211) and the discourse of innocence it engenders reinforces moral rhetoric (Meyer, 2007, p.85). The innocence conveyed by the status of a child legitimizes the call for action by organisations and letters from readers that *the MN* published. In an article entitled *What can you do for the Guantanamo Bay captives?* (**Imprisoning Democracy**, August 2003), *the MN* published ten points to encourage readers to advocate for the release of the detainees from Guantanamo Bay, repetitively citing that “children are among the detainees”.

## 2.5. Madrid (March 2004 to June 2005)

Table 9: Madrid keywords, events and topics

<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Story/Event</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<i>SoC</i>	School Organisation Committee The School Organisation Committee's decision on application of Muslim schools	Education
<i>Miraj</i>	Ali Miraj Muslim conservative candidate	UK General Elections
<i>Mole</i>	Farmida Bi and Nasser Butt, Muslim candidates standing for Mole Valley in Surrey	
<i>Dems</i>	Liberal Democrats	
<i>Moran</i>	Margaret Moran MP for Luton South	
<i>Fallujah</i>	US attacks on Fallujah	Iraq
<i>Sistani</i>	Ayatullah Sistani, Religious leader In context of Iraq elections	
<i>Workman</i>	Judge Timothy Workman in the case of Babar US extradition	Legal cases
<i>Tabassum</i>	Tahira Tabassum, Widow of Omar Sharif who was a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv	
<i>Tunggal</i>	Muslim women winning sports competitions	Muslims excelling in Sport
<i>Silat</i>	British Muslims, mainly women, excelling in Pencak Silat (Islamically inspired Martial Art)	
<i>Pencak</i>	First Muslim woman to win Pencak Silat Championship	
<i>PSF</i>	The Pencak Silat Federation of the UK	

<i>Shajaad</i>	Shajaad Khan, father of Amir Khan, the Youngest English boxer in Olympics	
<i>Aceh</i>	Banda Aceh, coastal area affected by the devastating earthquake off the coast of Indonesia	
<i>Laïcité</i>	Debate on laïcité in France	

- Absence of Madrid bombings

It is noticeable that, unlike mainstream press, *the MN* did not show any significant interest in the Madrid bombings. In fact, in March 2004, the month when the attack happened, only three out of 37 articles, containing the words *Madrid*, *Spain* or *bombings*, refer to the event. Even in these three articles, the focus is on the event's repercussions on Muslims rather than reporting it, with the titles: *Muslims' graves desecrated*, *Demand apology from Spain* and *Media demonises Muslims*. Two articles refer to two Islamophobic incidents following Madrid's bombings (vandalization of Muslim graves and humiliation of Muslims women in a Jerez airport in Spain). The third one is a claim that the bombings gave "the media an excuse to call the whole Muslim community as terrorist".

This follows the pattern observed in the 9/11 sub-corpus where newsworthy attacks committed by Muslim subjects (9/11 and Godhra train) are underreported. When mentioned, they are referenced within stories highlighting the effects of these events on Muslims. This pattern is also observed in the analysis of keyness. When looking at the top key keywords and analysing them in context, the words tend to refer to Islamophobia/anti-Muslim sentiments rather than terrorism, in the 9/11 and Madrid periods – periods when terrorism is found to be the most prominent topic in the study of mainstream press. As Fairclough states, "the analysis of discourses has to attend to absences as well as presences" (2013, p.185). At times of highly reported terrorist attacks by a few Muslims, *the Muslim News* decides to include, and focus on, the repercussions of these events and their media exposure on Muslims, and to exclude the events' coverage and the Muslims' role in them, or at least downplay it. The absence of top keywords referring to terrorism, violence and radicalisation as opposed to mainstream press may be disguised by the omnipresence of keywords related to Islamophobia, as both topics are discursively connected. The agency of Muslim terrorists in these events is not excluded, but rather referenced in the shadow of a more newsworthy event related to

Islamophobia. In a media context where a complete exclusion of Muslims' agency in terrorist attacks would be controversially noticeable, *the MN* uses a different strategy. It includes Muslim social actors in a background story (terrorism) to a more central one (Islamophobic incidents occurring in the aftermath of terrorist attacks). Van Leeuwen shows that such a strategy is less radical than it appears as the social agents "are not so much excluded as de-emphasised, pushed into the background" (Van Leeuwen, 2013, p.39). Along with the social actors, the event itself (Madrid bombings) is de-emphasised, mentioned only as a background story to stories about Muslims suffering from Islamophobia.

## 2.6. 7/7 (July 2005 to September 2006)

Table 10: 7/7 keywords, events and topics

Keywords	Story/Event	Topic
<i>Airline</i>	Islamophobic incidents in airlines (Emirates and Monarch)	Islamophobia
<i>break-in</i>	Islamophobic break-ins into mosques	
<i>Taskforces</i>	Home office Muslim taskforces and debate on its independence from government	London Bombings
<i>Stockwell</i>	Police killing Jean Charles de Menezes at Stockwell tube station after London Bombings (July 22)	
<i>Carlisle</i>	Post 7/7 Islamophobic attack on restaurant and mosque in Carlisle <sup>26</sup>	
<i>Roadshow</i>	Government roadshow to fight extremism and Muslims setting their own roadshow to counter it	
<i>Progressive</i>	Launch of Progressive British Muslims group	
<i>Glorifying</i>	Debating Terrorism Bill: Anti-terror proposal on the criminal offence of glorifying a terrorist act	Anti-terrorism
<i>Glorification</i>		

<sup>26</sup> While the categorisation of this story could be under Islamophobia rather than the London Bombings, its concordances commonly refer to 7/7. As discussed below, the two topics (London Bombings and Islamophobia) tend to merge, and their separation becomes artificial.

<i>Kahar</i>	Mohammed Abdul Kahar, shot by British police terror raid	
<i>Cartoons</i>	Danish cartoons	Danish cartoons
<i>Jyllands-Posten</i>	publication of Mohamed cartoons by Jyllands-Posten, Danish newspaper	
<i>Rasmussen</i>	Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Danish Prime Minister	
<i>Hayb</i>	Taysir Hayb	Israel
<i>Taysir</i>	Israeli sergeant who shot activist Tom Hurndall	
<i>Muzaffarabad</i>	the capital of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, hit by earthquake	Muzaffarabad earthquake
<i>Balakot</i>	a small city north of Muzaffarabad, hit by earthquake	
<i>discriminations</i>	against Muslims in employment and housing in Europe	Discrimination against Muslims
<i>EOC</i>	findings of Equal Opportunities Commission on the unemployment of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and African Caribbean women that are visibly Muslim (wearing Hijab)	
<i>Leyla</i>	Leyla Shahin  The case of Leyla Shahin against the prohibition of hijab in Turkish universities, ruled by the Grand Chamber of European Court of Human rights in November 2005	Hijab/legal cases
<i>Materazzi</i>	Marco Materazzi  Football player head butted by Zinedine Zidane, a Muslim football player	Muslim Sport icons
<i>Skelton</i>	Matt Skelton, a Commonwealth heavyweight champion who fought against Danny Williams, a British Muslim boxing champion	

- 7/7 Bombings

As observed in previous time periods, *the MN* engages with the aftermath of an event involving Muslims, rather than the event itself. Key keywords referring to London bombings are not related to the event itself, but to the actions taken against Muslims (Islamophobic attacks) or with them (Home office taskforce with Muslims) as a response to the bombings. The separation and categorisation of some key keywords under the topic of Islamophobia or the topic of London bombings becomes artificial as the two topics merge. For example, when analysing *Carlisle* in context (referring to Islamophobic attacks in Carlisle), it was common to find a reference to 7/7 in the concordances, as in the following extracts.

Extract 18:

« A Muslim owned business has been attacked three times since July 7 bombings. The owner of Lazeez Restaurant, Blackwell Road, **Carlisle** , Liakoth Ali Khondokar, told The Muslim News that the Islamophobic attacks were “disgusting and I feel very bad after what had happened.” » (*Islamophobic attack on restaurant*, **Islamophobic attacks**, August 2005)

Extract 19:

« **Carlisle**’s Muslims have suffered from the repercussions of the London bombings. Two men walking by verbally abused worshippers arriving at the city’s mosque in Brook Street on July 8. » (*Muslims sworn at near Carlisles mosque*, **Islamophobic attacks**, August 2005)

Even when reporting on the Progressive British Muslims group<sup>27</sup> (appearing in key keywords) months later, the emphasis is put on the media discourse and tensions that Muslims have faced following 7/7, suggesting that the group “has emerged from the frustrations of ordinary British Muslims about the representation of British Muslims in the mainstream media, particularly following July 7”.

In fact, almost all the key keywords appearing in this period relate to stories about events (Islamophobic attacks), policies (anti-terrorism bill), natural disasters (Muzaffarabad earthquake), legal cases (Leyla Shahin Hijab case), practices (discrimination against Muslims in employment and housing) and controversies (Danish cartoons) that affect Muslims. The period is marked by a high coverage of stories on Islamophobia and discrimination against

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<sup>27</sup> Progressive British Muslims group was a group formed of Liberal British Muslims after 7/7 to represent moderate Muslim voices that are underrepresented in mainstream media.



Muslims. Analysing the concordances of some of the key keywords that were not classified under these two topics (such as the Danish cartoons and anti-terrorism key keywords) shows that their topics are in fact tied to Islamophobia and discrimination in the text. The coverage of the Danish cartoons is marked with words such as *Islamophobia*, *hate*, *racism* and *discrimination*, as in the examples below.

Extract 20:

« Muslim Council of Britain's, Secretary-General, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, told The Muslim News the **cartoons** "reflects the emergence of an increasingly xenophobic tone being adopted towards Muslims in parts of the Western media." » (*5000 Muslims rally against abusive cartoons*, **Home News**, February 2006)

Extract 21:

« The **cartoons** and all the subsequent dramas that have unfolded reveal a deep vein of hatred and mistrust of Muslims, who are tolerated in the West, on ransom of accepting "our" values. » (*CartoonGate and the bigger picture*, **Comment**, February 2006)

## 2.7. Debate on veil (October 2006 to December 2006)

Considering that the number of articles in this period is smaller (only from three issues – October to December 2006), keywords that appear in at least two articles, instead of three, are considered as key keywords.

Table 11: Debate on veil keywords, events and topics

Keywords	Story/Event	Topic
<i>Hanoun</i>	Beit Hanoun in Gaza	Israel/Palestine Israel/Lebanon
<i>Beit</i>	Israel's massacre of Palestinians shelling Beit Hanoun	
<i>Beckett</i>	Margaret Beckett Foreign Secretary's refusal to condemn massacre of Palestinian civilians in Beit Hanoun and omitting criticism of Israel's attack on Lebanon in annual human rights report	

<i>Basha</i>	Alexander Omar Basha  Member of the Force's Diplomatic Protection Group who was granted special dispensation from guarding Israeli Embassy after objecting to the Israeli bombings in Lebanon	
<i>NPT</i>	Non Proliferation Treaty  Israel's refusal to join the international treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons	
<i>Veil</i>	Straw veil debate	Debate on veil
<i>Veils</i>		
<i>Myth</i>	Referring to the "myth of the veil" in the context of the veil debate	
<i>Airways</i>	Stories on imams and other Muslims forced to disembark airplanes	Islamophobia and discrimination
<i>Jet</i>		
<i>Passenger</i>	Passengers commenting on the six imams forced to disembark	
<i>Keynes</i>	Milton Keynes cemetery where Muslim headstones were dug up and smashed	
<i>Headstones</i>	Reports on Muslim headstones vandalised	
<i>Equalities</i>	Muslims request for equalities legislation to cover religion	
<i>ODIs</i>	A One Day International (ODI) – cricket	Sport
<i>Indies</i>	The West Indies cricket team in the international cricket council winning the ICC Champions Trophy	
<i>WBC</i>	WBC World Boxing Council	
<i>Sanders</i>	Corey Sanders fighting against Muslim convert Mike Tyson	

<i>micro-credit</i>	Muhammad Yunus, pioneer of the system of micro-credit, receives Nobel Peace Prize	Muslim economist Nobel Prize
<i>Yunus</i>		
<i>Islamicate</i>	Referring to islamicate sources and history when discussing issues concerning Islam and Muslims in the UK	Debate on Muslims in the UK
<i>Coloniality</i>	Appearing in articles examining the roots of dismissal and denial of Muslims' grievances and affirming the logic of coloniality as the source of it	
<i>Narratives</i>	narratives used when discussing issues affecting Muslims in the UK	
<i>Ruth</i>	Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly, on government-Muslims dialogue on extremism	
<i>Packs</i>	Teaching packs used in schools referring to 3 stories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teaching packs based on 9/11 withdrawn from school</li> <li>- Information packs sent to schools to deal with backlash to the anti-terror raids</li> <li>- Use of packs promoting the creationist alternative to Darwinian evolution in schools</li> </ul>	Education

Stories about the discrimination and Islamophobia that Muslims face in the UK continue across this period. The sub-corpus is also marked by a focus on the 'debate on veil'. The public debate about British Muslims, marked by the debate on veil, has expanded to cover issues related to legislation, equality and gender in *the MN*. Several key keywords refer to the debate and the different arguments presented by policymakers, newspapers and experts with words such as *narratives* and *myths*. *Myth* and *myths* in this sub-corpus refer mainly (but not solely) to the myth of the sword and the veil, attributed to a stereotypical discourse that associates Islam and Muslims with the sword (violence) and veil (oppression). In all concordances containing *myths*, the texts point to a constructed discourse (usually by 'the West', Europe, newspapers or politicians) about Muslims. The concordances reveal two

different reported myths: one that constructs inherit characteristics of Muslims and Islam (mainly the sword and the veil), and another that relates to a contested relationship between Muslims in Britain/ Europe/ 'the West' and their societies.

The second myth relates to the debate on the inclusion/exclusion of Muslims in Europe. In this debate, several arguments are presented in *the MN* when reporting exclusion and segregation faced by Muslims. *The MN* chooses which arguments to present as a myth and which myths to challenge. The following extract presents the inclusion of different groups in 'the West' ("we all belong to a shared community") as a *myth* that excludes the reality of these groups. The article goes on to emphasize the exclusion and segregation faced by Muslims in 'the West' and uses multiple adjectives and nouns to describe inclusive 'Western' societies as "fake", a "hypocrisy" and "an entirely constructed notion". The article, appearing in a special supplement on the political debate about Muslims' integration in Britain, considers inclusion and the notion of a "shared community in the West" as "the new myths". Although it does not clearly identify old myths, it evokes narratives of a "common culture, and of 'Western civilisation' or 'the democracies'" as fake claims<sup>28</sup>.

Extract 22:

« The new myths that we all belong to a shared community in the West exclude the experience of millions. For some groups, that exclusion has helped the emergence of identity politics. They have rejected assimilation into this freshly minted Western norm and are developing their own identities with a loyalty not tethered to any inaccessible and unaccountable community called 'the west'. The militant and dispossessed with no sense of geographical or national boundary sees opposition to the West in whatever form as justified and even – in the absence of any alternative explanation – a sacred duty. » (*The War on Terror, Special Supplement*, October 2006)

The "shared community in the West" is not the only *myth* creating an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006) that is contested in this sub-corpus. Following the development of this political debate throughout the monthly issues of *the MN*, other myths become connected to the constructed narratives of inclusion in 'the West'. The following extract discusses how Muslims are imagined in "the West" with stories of violence (the sword) and oppression (the veil). It suggests that these constructions (e.g. "talking about markers of separation") do not allow "new connections". This view offers a different understanding and explanation of

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<sup>28</sup> The full article is included in the appendix.

Muslims' exclusion from British society, contesting Jack Straw's comments<sup>29</sup>. While the MP's editorial in the Lancashire Telegraph that sparked the debate on veil considers the veil 'a mark of separation' that prevents Muslims from integrating in Britain, *the MN* article considers these rhetorical comments about Muslims to aim at exclusion. Constructing Muslims and Islam as out of place in an imagined 'Western' society feeds into their exclusion and the West's failure to integrate them.

Extract 23:

« The Sword and the Veil are once again at the centre of polemics. They uncover the simplistic view that the West holds buried deep inside itself of Islam's supposedly inherent violence, oppression and barbarism. But they are myths created from icons that have been misrepresented and conveniently fitted to meet a political narrative. The Sword and the Veil are symbols that lie deep within the European narrative, and are therefore easy to hook onto. They were **myths** on which to build a political vision when they were first created. (...) Talking about "markers of separation" and 'wars' only entrenches these myths in a historical and irrelevant narrative, instead of allowing new connections to be built. » (*Don't define us by the myths of the sword and the veil*, **Comment**, December 2006)

As such, *myths* about British Muslims contribute to shaping their reality: an experience of exclusion and segregation. As extract 22 states, the reality of exclusion helps "the emergence of identity politics" and the violence it leads to (i.e. terrorism). These myths are deemed to be the source of the reality that makes of some Muslims militant opponents of "the West".

In fact, these views by *the MN* contest not only political discourses, but also narratives in mainstream press. The possibility that the portrayal of Muslims and Islam in the media contributes to the radicalisation of some Muslims is excluded in mainstream press. When showing that mainstream press in the UK associate Muslims with radicalisation and violence, Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery find that "any possible role that newspapers themselves have to play, such as considering whether their representation of Muslims and Islam could contribute towards such radicalisation, tends to go unremarked" (2013, p.229).

Mainstream news about British Muslims tend to give little attention to historical, contextual and situational information that can facilitate understanding of Muslims' experiences and

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<sup>29</sup> Jack Straw, government minister and MP, wrote in the Lancashire Evening Telegraph in October 2006 that he asked women wearing niqab to remove it when talking to him. His comments triggered a debate in Britain on the veil.

reality. This results in simplistic stories, or *myths* about Muslims that attract the reader's attention and feed into his/her interest in Muslims, as a highly newsworthy topic. Other topics connected to Muslims in the media, such as 9/11 and the War on Terror, do become abstract and detached from reality as expressed in the following extract. A multitude of phrases (e.g. "bolt from the blue"), adjectives (e.g. "abstract noun", "monstrous") and nouns ("mystery") reinforce *the MN* argument that other constructed narratives (such as the War on Terror) present an untrue and absurd story that offers no contextual explanations.

Extract 24:

« The 'War on Terror' has been described as the first war against an abstract noun. The endless TV reruns of 9/11 fix in a lot of British minds the picture of a monstrous bolt from the blue. The images weave a mystery around an event, from which the 'War on Terror' appeared to emerge. The event has no history (except its own), no causes, no ancestors. »  
(*The 'War on Terror'*, **Special supplement**, October 2006)

The mythification of Muslims is further observed in articles covering the debate on the veil. The prominence of these articles during this timeframe is not surprising. Muslim women and the veil have been a contested site of debate in British mainstream press. Khiabany and Williamson found that articles in British newspapers about the veil transmitted hostile views (2011, p.173). They also reflect the development of the representation of the veil in media and political discourses from a visible marker of victimization to a visible marker of separation (Ibid.). Although the debate on veil intensified in 2006, the veil has been widely discussed since the beginning of the millennium as the War on Terror progressed. At first, news and views about the veil were marked by othering representations, mainly reporting about Afghan women oppressed under Taliban control and tying their victimhood to a need for military intervention in Afghanistan. But this external image of Muslim women outside 'the West' shifted, when representing British veiled women, to "an internal sign of fundamentalism and a visible threat at home" (Ibid., 183). The veil was rhetorically used as a separating marker that facilitated the othering of female British Muslims. Its representation as oppressive, constructed from the beginning of the war on Afghanistan, was extended when portraying British Muslims. Tarlo notes that for media in the West, the veil and its concealment "seems to serve as a visual shorthand for lack of integration, oppression and threat" (2007, p144). Such representations demonise Muslims as problematic and failing to integrate. This is supported by other studies that found the coverage to associate the veil with

security threat, terror and as a threat to Britishness (Khiabany and Williamson, 2008, p.69). In *the MN*, the topic is covered with articles that highlight the controversy and public or media contestation of the veil, as well as articles that defend the right of Muslim women to choose the veil.

## 2.8. Somalia (January 2007 to November 2008)

Table 12: Somalia keywords, events and topics

Keywords	Story/Event	Topic
<i>MQM</i>	Muttahida Quami Movement, liberal political party of Pakistan, and Imran Khan legal actions against Altaf Hussain	Pakistan General elections
<i>PPP</i>	Pakistan People’s Party different articles referring to several stories (mainly Pakistan Elections)	
<i>Altaf</i>	Altaf Hussain Leader of MQM party	
<i>CHP</i>	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Turkey’s Republican People’s Party	Turkey presidential elections
<i>Paddick</i>	Brian Paddick Liberal Democrat candidate for the London mayoral election	London Mayoral Elections
<i>Facebook</i>	Facebook refusal to remove Islamophobic groups	Islamophobia
<i>Rochester</i>	Rochester Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali’s Islamophobic comments	
<i>Nazir-Ali</i>		
<i>MPACUK</i>	Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK The Committee’s pre-elections campaign and lobbying campaign against extending detention of Guantanamo Bay detainees	Guantanamo Bay
McNulty	Tony McNulty, Home Office Minister for Policing and Security, in articles debating legal cases in connection with terrorism and discrimination	Anti-terrorism and legal cases about

<i>Downloaded</i>	Terrorist materials downloaded by Muslim student	discrimination
<i>Kafeel</i>	Kafeel Ahmed Suspect charged over failed terrorist attacks in Glasgow airport	
<i>MPA</i>	Metropolitan Police Authority Debate on police stop and search policy and Tarique Ghaffur legal case accusing the Metropolitan Police Commissioner of racism and discrimination	
<i>Sharia</i>	Anti-Shariah media reactions following Archbishop of Canterbury remarks on civil and religious law.	Sharia law
<i>Stunell</i>	Liberal Democrats Communities Spokesman, Andrew Stunell defence of freedom of religious and cultural expression in extremism debate	
<i>Sukuk</i>	Sukuk consultation	Islamic finance and the global financial crisis
<i>Annapolis</i>	The Annapolis Conference, a Middle East peace conference aimed to revive the Israeli–Palestinian peace process	Israel/Palestine
<i>Ibragimov</i>	Sultan Ibragimov Muslim Russian heavyweight boxer winning the World Boxing Organisation heavyweight title	Sport
<i>Cage</i>	Cage Rage	
<i>Rage</i>	Mixed Martial Arts promotion	
<i>UFC</i>	The Ultimate Fighting Championship of Mixed Martial Arts	
<i>Semi</i>	Semi-finals of various competitions	
<i>Nasri</i>	Samir Nasri Muslim French footballer	
<i>Platov</i>	Oleg Platov Boxer who fought against Muslim heavy weight Champion Danny Williams	



<i>Earl</i>	Graham Earl English lightweight boxer who fought Muslim world boxing champion Amir Khan in 2007	
<i>BRONZE</i>	Bronze medallist in different sports competitions	
<i>Gomez</i>	Michael Gomez British boxer who lost against Muslim boxer Amir Khan in 2008	
<i>Limond</i>	Willie Limond British boxer who fought against Muslim boxer Amir Khan	
<i>Holyfield</i>	Evander Holyfield American boxer who fought against several Muslim boxers	
<i>Hotspur</i>	Tottenham Hotspur Football Club in the Premier League	
<i>Wenger</i>	Arsene Wenger Manager of Arsenal football club	
<i>Lawton</i>	Scott Lawton British boxer who fought against Muslim boxer Amir Khan	
<i>Woolmer</i>	Bob Woolmer Death of cricket coach	
<i>Kolo</i>	Kolo Touré Muslim footballer in Liverpool club	
<i>Trotters</i>	Nickname of Bolton Wanderers Football Club	
<i>Kanoute</i>	Frédéric Kanouté Muslim footballer	
<i>Calzaghe</i>	Joseph Calzaghe Welsh boxer who fought against Muslim convert Bernard Humphrey Hopkins	
<i>Methane</i>	methane emissions discussed in Health and environment articles	Health

This sub-corpus is marked by a significant coverage of political events, mainly outside the UK, such as the General Elections in Pakistan, the presidential elections in Turkey and the Israel/Palestine peace process. The London Mayoral Elections also stand out as a key topic. However, as observed in the Madrid sub-corpus, another important event that was found to influence mainstream reporting about Muslims is absent in this sub-corpus: the war on Somalia. Although the sub-corpus covers various stories and events (e.g. elections in different countries, reports on cases of discrimination, sport events), each story is unrepresentative of this period on its own. It is therefore difficult to signpost this sub-corpus under one of these events. I opted to keep the sub-corpus signposted under *Somalia* to highlight its absence in *the MN* (compared to mainstream press) and avoid confusion with several titles.

Looking at all the concordances in which *Somalia* appears, only half of the 14 concordances refer to stories about this conflict. The other seven concordances refer to stories about climate change (affecting several African countries including Somalia), an ambitious British farmer (of Somali descent), language tests policy (quoting affected students including a Somali one), the disproportional representation of Muslims in UK prisons (foreign prisoners including some Somalis), the origins of British Muslims, Muslim aid organisations target countries (including Somalia) and Somalis living in England.

#### Concordances: *Somalia*

File ID	Concordance
file482587...	21,500 more combat troops to Iraq and attacking <b>Somalia</b> using Ethiopia as a proxy. The new divergence
file482589...	of climate change in the form of recent floods in <b>Somalia</b> , Kenya and Ethiopia that hit over 1.8 million
file482589...	including 80,000 refugees from the conflict in <b>Somalia</b> who were living in refugee camps in Kenya. Local
file482589...	over 50 years. Helping this region, especially <b>Somalia</b> , has been made more difficult by continued
file482590...	resource. They want us to remain silent while <b>Somalia</b> has just been bombed with the support of Britain
file482602...	as young as seven months and were arrested in <b>Somalia</b> and Kenya as they fled December's rout of the
file482619...	four generations of farmers and herdsmen in <b>Somalia</b> ,” he said. The scheme is designed to revive an
file482647...	all within seven years. ‘Khadijah’ from <b>Somalia</b> barely had three years of disrupted schooling

file482653...	fired at least one cruise missile into southern	<b>Somalia</b>	near the Kenyan border, targeting an Al-Qa'ida
file482653...	against a known Al-Qaeda terrorist in southern	<b>Somalia</b>	," Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said.
file482658...	was 416 from Pakistan, followed by 322 from	<b>Somalia</b>	, 259 from Iraq, 221 from Turkey, 185 from
file482671...	, from North and West Africa, particularly	<b>Somalia</b>	. We also know that all these figures are out of
file482683...	operate in countries such as Bangladesh,	<b>Somalia</b>	, Pakistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and
file482686...	in 2002, which responded to many needs of the	<b>Somalia</b>	community in Wales. The organisation's main

Throughout the years, *the MN* has shown interest in covering conflicts affecting Muslims worldwide (e.g. Chechnya, Second Intifada, Iraq), as well as the political and public reactions to these conflicts in Britain (e.g. demonstrations, policy debates). Although the conflict in Somalia was not met with public reaction in the UK as other conflicts did (such as the war on Iraq), its insignificance during this time period is remarkable. Over 43 000 Somalis were living in Britain (Office for National Statistics, 2001)<sup>30</sup>, most of whom fled conflict in their country during the 90s. So how could this conflict fail to spark *the MN* interest? In fact, *the MN* disinterest in conflict stories in general is observed with other keywords. The reference to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict during this period was marked by the *Annapolis* keyword. The stories focused on the Annapolis peace conference that took place in November 2007, aiming to revive the peace process. Across all keywords, the reference to conflict and war in this sub-corpus is very minimal compared to previous years. This minimal coverage occurs in conjunction with an increased reporting on sport. The articles cover major international sport competitions reporting on the performance of Muslim athletes. As shall be discussed in the next chapter, sport news offer alternative and positive representations of Muslims outside the framework of conflict. The decrease in conflict stories and simultaneous increase in sport stories observed in this sub-corpus could be a manifestation of *the MN* strategy to move away from negative press about Muslims in favour of more positive news.

In this sub-corpus, *the MN* continues to underline the link between terrorism, anti-terrorism and discrimination, a tendency also observed in the following sub-corpus. Articles containing four key keywords (*McNulty*, *downloaded*, *Kafeel* and *MPA*) report on terrorism and anti-terrorism events while connecting them to discrimination.

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<sup>30</sup> 43 533 Somalis living in Britain according to the 2001 census in England and Wales.

Stories about *Kafeel*, a terrorist who attempted attacks in Glasgow airport, cover the story with a focus on his Indian brother. In fact, half of the stories about this event concern his brother, who was not convicted for terror but for failing to provide authorities with information on his brother's terrorism plans. The following extract, quoting the Indian government, points out to the unfair treatment of this suspect.

Extract 25:

« He was charged with having, “information which could have prevented an act of terrorism.” The Indian government has expressed its disappointment that British authorities have failed to extend even the most basic level of counsellor access to Sabeel. » (*Suspects charged over failed terrorist attacks*, **Home News**, July 2007)

In other news stories, the arrest of a Muslim student preparing for his PhD at the University of Nottingham on radical Muslims groups, who downloaded terrorist materials related to his studies from governmental websites was reported in *the MN* with emphasis on the controversy surrounding his arrest. As observed in the following extract and throughout all articles referring to the story, *the MN* connects this case to racial profiling, discrimination and abuse in the way terror laws are applied against Muslims in the UK. The contestation also appears in an interview by *the MN*'s editor with Home Secretary (*Anti-terror legislations not aimed at Muslims, but at terrorists*, **Editorial**, April 2008).

Extract 26:

« Police have long been under fire for abusing terror laws to target and profile members of the Muslim community, particularly in the over-zealous use of stop and search. But the arrests are believed to be the first following the Government's introduction of controversial guidelines for universities to effectively spy on Muslim students and Islamic groups. These arrests are extremely worrying indicators for the future of academic freedom. » (*Vindictive use of terror laws*, **Editorial**, May 2008)

Covering this story, *the MN* uses several negative adjectives to describe anti-terrorism practices (such as stop and search), including terror laws and their effect as “over-zealous”, “abusing”, “controversial” and “worrying”. It repeatedly represents Muslims as the target of these laws and practices (“members of the Muslim community”, “Muslim students”, “Islamic groups”). It also strategically employs adverbs to point out the fact that Muslim students are being spied on (“effectively spy on”), to intensify the alarming aspect of the arrests

(“extremely worrying”) and to bring attention to the excessive use of stop and search practices (“particularly in the over-zealous use of stop and search”).

The emphasis on the discriminatory aspect of stop and search is also found in articles containing the key keyword *McNulty* and *MPA*, often presenting statistics that show the racial disparity and racial profiling of this practice (“People of Asian appearance were found to be five times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people, according to figures compiled by British Transport Police in August 2005” (*Stop & searches result in 1.5% arrests*, **Home News**, October 2007)). In fact, the tight relationship between terrorism, anti-terrorism and discrimination is not presented as a discursive choice that *the MN* makes. In its editorial *Definition of Terrorism*, *the MN* considers this tight relationship to be the result of a problematic definition of terrorism in the UK. The editorial criticizes this broad definition and the anti-terrorism policies, programs and practices designed in response to it (including the controversial offence of glorifying a terrorist act presented in the 7/7 sub-corpus). It advances the argument that the discriminatory aspect of anti-terrorism is due, in part, to the unclear and general definition of terrorism, allowing it to extend to “conspiracy and more recently to glorification in what appears to have become a witch hunt against only Muslims. (...) The contemporary label is highly pejorative; it is an emotive stigma that demonises certain people and groups”. (*Definition of Terrorism*, **Editorial**, August 2007)

## 2.9. Gaza (December 2008 to December 2009)

Table 13: Gaza keywords, events and topics

Keywords	Story/Event	Topic
<i>Goldstone</i>	Richard Goldstone Goldstone report on Gaza War Crimes	War on Gaza
<i>Palestina</i>	Viva Palestina	
<i>Viva</i>	British organisation running a convoy of humanitarian aid to Gaza	
<i>Heartiest</i>	heartiest congratulations Messages to <i>the Muslim News</i> for its 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	<i>The Muslim News</i> Anniversary

<i>Kotelnik</i>	Andreas Kotelnik,  Ukrainian boxer loss to Amir Khan, British Muslim boxer at the World Boxing Championship	Sport
<i>Salita</i>	Dmitry Salita  American boxer loss to Amir Khan	
<i>Barrera</i>	Antonio Barrera  Mexican boxer loss to Amir Khan	
<i>Roach</i>	Freddi Roach (trainer)  Amir Khan's trainer comments on Khan's wins	
<i>PSA</i>	Professional Squash Association  Ramy Ashour's win	
<i>Ashour</i>	Ramy Ashour  Egyptian squash player wins at the International Squash Championship	
<i>Arshavin</i>	Andrey Arshavin  Russian footballer playing in United	Health
<i>Swine</i>	Swine flu epidemic	
<i>Swat</i>	State of Swat in Malakand (Pakistan)	
<i>Malakand</i>	Second battle of Swat	Terrorism
<i>Renewable</i>	Renewable energy	
		Climate change / environment
<i>Obama</i>	Barak Obama's elections  Obama's foreign policies (Iran, "Muslim World", Lebanon, Iraq, Gaza)  Obama's climate change policies  Obama's Nobel Prize	Several topics related to Obama's leadership

<i>Dresden</i>	Islamophobic murder of Marwa Ali El-Sherbini in Dresden in Germany	Islamophobia
<i>Marwa</i>		
<i>UAF</i>	Unite Against Fascism Demonstrations and actions against Islamophobic protests and against the vandalization of Muslims graves	
<i>EDL</i>	English Defence League Anti-Islamic march and protests Vandalization of Muslim graves	
<i>Bettison</i>	Norman Bettison Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police and senior officer in charge of terror prevention Comments on right wing extremists targeting Muslims and on Muslim children being suspected as potential terrorists	Islamophobia, counter-terrorism, anti-terrorism and terrorism
<i>Prevent</i>	Prevent strategy	
<i>MacGregor</i>	Neil MacGregor's case (terrorist planning Islamophobic attacks)	
<i>CTU</i>	Counter Terrorism Units	
<i>MI</i>	MI5	
<i>Lewington</i>	Neil Lewington's arrest for terrorism	Terrorism and racism

In this corpus marking the latest covered timeframe in the analysis, the dialectic relationship between terrorism, anti-terrorism, counter-terrorism, racism and Islamophobia becomes more complex. These five topics are fluid in articles containing key keywords that refer to the same story. For example, in most of the articles containing the key keyword *Bettison*<sup>31</sup>, the reported story discusses the anti-terrorism practice of encouraging teachers and mothers to report on

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<sup>31</sup> Referring to Norman Bettison, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police and senior officer in charge of terror prevention.

children they suspect are prone to radicalisation, racism (against ‘the West’) and terrorism. The topic of anti-terrorism leads to a discussion of what is considered terrorism, highlighting a potential link between anti-terrorism, its biased practices and Islamophobia. Another reported story under this topic follows the arrest of the Neo-nazi terrorist Neil Lewington<sup>32</sup>. As shown in the links below, the articles tend to link racism (against non-whites) with terrorism (describing the terrorist’s plot) and the inefficiency of counter-terrorism agencies.

The above topics become connected, sometimes highlighting institutional ties between counter-terrorism, anti-terrorism and Islamophobia by describing anti-terrorism institutions and practices as Islamophobic. For example, the articles about *Prevent*, a key keyword, refer to Islamophobic biases in the institutional practices that follow the counter-terrorism strategy Contest. *Prevent* is an anti-terror programme that is part of the UK government’s counter-terrorism strategy Contest, launched in 2003. It aims to identify and support people at risk of extremism and joining terrorist groups. *Prevent*, commonly referred to by the media as the Prevent strategy, has been met with divisive views. While officials, such as policy makers and police officers argue that the strategy is useful and partially successful, research shows that it has a biased focus on Muslims, can create mistrust between communities and result in being counterproductive, leading to more radicalisation and extremism (Singh, 2016, pp.17-18). In *the MN*, an editorial about Prevent, argues that it “effectively stereotypes the whole of the Muslim community as potential terrorists” (*Prevent strategy structurally flawed, Editorial*, August 2009). In the stories on Prevent, the link between counter-terrorism, right wing extremism, Islamophobia and terrorism becomes stronger and is emphasized in this sub-corpus.

In all articles about Neil MacGregor<sup>33</sup>, a terrorist who planned Islamophobic attacks, the four topics are intertwined. When reporting about the terrorist’s plans to carry Islamophobic attacks, *the MN* raises questions about the movement of right wing extremism and its Islamophobic motives to terrorize Muslims. It also accuses counter terrorism agencies (and the media) of an unfair handling of the case, alluding to their negative biases against Muslims and accusing them of double standards as in the extracts below. Indeed, although MacGregor expressed racist views and admitted planning terrorist attacks against Muslims, he was not charged with terrorism, rather he was dismissed as a fantasist.

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<sup>32</sup> Neil Lewington, a Neo-nazi terrorist who planned a racist terror campaign.

<sup>33</sup> Neil MacGregor, a supremacist who planned a terrorist bombing of Scotland’s biggest mosque, had expressed racist and Islamophobic comments vowing to murder a Muslim per week until all mosques in Scotland are shut down. He was sentenced to three years’ probation.



Extract 27:

« Scotland's Crown Office and Police accused of double standards on terrorism Scotland's Crown Office and Strathclyde Police were forced to explain faith-based discrepancies in the use anti-terror legislation, after a self-proclaimed racist who threatened to bomb a mosque and behead Muslims was merely convicted for breach of the peace and dismissed as a "fantasist and lunatic". Leading members of Scotland's Muslim community headed by the Scottish Islamic Foundation (SIF) accused the two public bodies of "double standards" in their handling of Neil MacGregor's case. » (*Scotland's Crown Office and Police accused of double standards on terrorism*, **Home News**, May 2009)

Extract 28:

« The Leeds Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) refused to provide information of whether the 14 white extremists who were detained were charged or not. The other 16 were released without charge, what the CTU said had been helping the police with inquiries. However, it remains difficult to understand the reluctance of the media to break its virtual blackout not only on this story but also why the judiciary system appears to treat right-wing terrorists with far less severity. The most recent case was Neil MacGregor, who having threatened to blow up Glasgow Central Mosque and to kill a Muslim a day until the closure of all mosques in Scotland, was only ordered to undergo a psychiatric assessment. » (*Terrorism blackout*, **Editorial**, July 2009)

The reference to double standards is further emphasized throughout the articles. *The MN* compares between the process (psychiatric assessment, the lack of publicity and media blackout) and sentence of MacGregor's trial (a three years' probation) and the punishment of British Muslims convicted of terrorism. This is highlighted in the choice of titles framing these articles: *Outrage at unjust application of terror laws*, *Terrorism blackout* and *Scotland's Crown Office and Police accused of double standards on terrorism*.

Other institutions, such as MI5<sup>34</sup>, are also represented in a discursive space where counter-terrorism and Islamophobia (or racism) converge. Articles about MI5 focus on accusations of racism in counter terrorism policing, of bribing terror suspects, of incompetence in preventing terrorism, of Islamophobic counter-terrorism strategies and of the UK complicity in US torture of terrorism suspects.

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<sup>34</sup> MI5, the United Kingdom's security agency.

While these connected topics occupy an important space in the coverage of this period in *the MN*, another (seemingly unrelated) topic that continuously dominates the latest period of analysis is sport. The stories cover the accomplishments of Muslim sportswomen and men inside and outside the UK. Another tendency is observed in this sub-corpus: the names of non-Muslim athletes do not appear as key keywords in the corpus unless the stories concern their defeat by Muslim ones. The multiplicity of articles about Muslim sportswomen and men winning championships and competitions can contribute to balancing news content with positive stories and offering an alternative discourse to mainstream news. This is further discussed in Chapter Four following the findings in this chapter.

Keywords show the most prominent words in a sub-corpus in comparison to a reference corpus (i.e. *the MN* overall corpus). The presence of some frequent words in a particular sub-corpus (ex. *Israel*, *Iraq*) does not suggest their exclusive frequency in a given sub-corpus. They can be present in other sub-corpora, while having the highest occurrence in a particular one. Similarly, the absence of a word in a sub-corpus can be a result of its prominence in several sub-corpora rather than just one. For example, when analysing the Chechnya sub-corpus, the word *heterosexual* was found to be key. The concordances analysis shows that it occurs in the context of debating homosexuality. However, *homosexuality* and/or *homosexual* do not appear in the list of keywords in spite of appearing in all concordances of *heterosexual*. This could indicate their prominence in other sub-corpora.

The analysis in this chapter follows the development of interest in stories catering to *the MN* readers by shedding light on the events and topics that marked Muslims in the UK during the twelve years. The keywords analysis shows that while the topics that *the MN* considers worthy of coverage and focus seem to be different throughout the years than those in mainstream press, they remain connected to them.

In covering newsworthy events involving Muslims, *the MN* focuses on their repercussions on Muslims, highlighting stories where Muslims are victims of Islamophobia, war, violence and alienation. This said, it would be wrong to conclude that Muslims are depicted as lacking agency. Their agency is represented but it is rather tied to positive domains that are highly valued in society, such as education, sports, economics and politics. The fact that agency is not attributed to Muslims in stories on terrorism, or that it is de-emphasised, is intended to counter the dominance of this negatively valued agency in mainstream media.

Several studies find the news discourse on Muslims (as agents) to be dominated by terrorism and concerns about security (Lewis, Mason and Moore, 2011, pp.48-49). In contrast, *the Muslim News* puts emphasis on stories about the consequences of Islamophobic attacks on British Muslims following terrorist events; stories that are not predominant in UK mainstream coverage of Muslims. Whilst terrorism in *the MN* is reported through single momentary stories (e.g. 9/11 and 7/7) and sometimes concealed (e.g. Madrid bombings), anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism become recurrent topics that are reinforced by the omnipresence of another topic: Islamophobia. Terrorism is therefore more present in *the MN* by its antithesis and is later connected to legal cases about discrimination as revealed in the key keywords analysis. Terrorism is also referenced by policies and programmes aiming to prevent it (anti-terrorism) and counter it (counter-terrorism). In fact, *counter* collocates the most with terrorism across all *the MN* corpus. *The MN* tends to frame news and views about terrorism within other topics, mainly anti-terrorism, counter-terrorism and Islamophobia. The way terrorism is framed in *the MN* detaches it from Islamic beliefs and religion and is linked to other topics that become the primary story (e.g. Islamophobia). This is significantly different from mainstream press where Islamophobia is rarely referenced, mainly in the context of justifying it by arguing Islamophobia and racism are a result of Islamic extremism (Poole, 2002, p.81). In *the MN*, the lack of interest in terrorism stories that have not been followed by (or could not be linked to) significant Islamophobic attacks in the UK (e.g. Madrid bombings) suggest that *the MN* establishes the news value of terrorism stories in relation to their Islamophobic aftermath (e.g. 9/11, 7/7) or their Islamophobic causes (e.g. *MacGregor's* story). As such, terrorism stories tend to be selected when they fit into the framework of stories on Islamophobia, counter-terrorism and/or racism. Van Dijk states that topics “represent what news-makers construe to be the most important information about a news event. The selection and textual prominence of topics result from routines of news-making and embody criteria of journalistic decisions about the newsworthiness of events. Therefore, topics also manifest complex networks of professional, social and cultural ideologies” (1991, p.71). By framing terrorism within these topics, *the MN* transforms the news value of terrorism to create a news value for Islamophobia.

### 3. Recurrent topics across periods

When looking at *the MN* reported topics across periods, some topics appear to be frequent, especially in later years of the analysed timeframe as shown in table 14. Starting from the Iraq sub-corpus, Islamophobia becomes a recurrent topic henceforth, except for the period of the Madrid bombings, a period where the bombings were not significantly reported and where terrorism does not appear as a key topic. The Madrid bombings did not have the same news values and continuous presence in UK media as did 9/11 and 7/7. Nevertheless, it was present and found to influence mainstream press representations of Muslims (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.96). In contrast, *the MN* had a minimal engagement with this negative story on Muslims, dictated by the combination of its local reach as well as the negative news content about Muslims that this story carries. This minimal engagement could result from the decrease of stories on Islamophobic attacks on Muslims in the aftermath of this terrorist attack. If the coverage of terrorist attacks in *the MN* is conditioned by the possibility of extending their news value to Islamophobic reactions to them, then the irrelevance of the Madrid bombings could be explained with its unimportant consequences on Muslims. Indeed, unlike the two sub-corpora preceding and following it (Iraq and 7/7), the Madrid sub-corpus does not show a significant presence of keywords referring to articles on Islamophobia.

Table 14: Recurrent topics across periods

Kosovo (Jan 98- Jul 99)	Chechnya (Aug 99- Aug 2001)	9/11 (Sep 01- Feb 03)	Iraq (Mar 03- Feb 04)	Madrid (Mar 04- Jun 05)	7/7 (Jul 05- Sep 06)	Debate on veil (Oct 06- Dec 06)	Somalia (Jan 07- Nov 08)	Gaza (Dec 08- Dec 09)
Muslim schools in the UK	UK General Elections	2002 Gujarat riots	Islamophobia	Education	Islamophobia	Israel/Palestine Israel/Lebanon	Pakistan General elections	War on Gaza
Conflict and Refugees	Second Intifada	9/11	Guantanamo	UK General Elections	London Bombings	Debate on veil	Turkey presidential elections	<i>The Muslim News</i> Anniversary
Government's response to conflicts outside UK	Education	Second Intifada	Iraq	Iraq	Anti-terrorism	Islamophobia	London Mayoral Elections	Sport

Legal cases	Armenians/Muslims genocides	2002 Kashmir elections	Palestine/Israel	Legal cases	Danish cartoons	Muslim economist Nobel Prize	Islamophobia	Health
Homelessness amongst Muslims	Legal cases: Imam case and Bhatti murder case	Media interest in Islam and Muslims	Kashmir protests	Muslims excelling in Sport	Israel	Sport	Guantanamo Bay	Terrorism
Film on Muhammad	Racial and faith equality	Charity	Islamic art		Muzaffarabad earthquake	Debate on Muslims in the UK	Anti-terrorism and discrimination legal cases	Climate change / environment
Id regulations	Immigration	Debate on cultural dialogue			Discrimination against Muslims	Education	Islamic finance and the global financial crisis	Obama's leadership
	Sharia'a in Nigeria	Islamic Art			Hijab/legal cases		Israel/Palestine	Islamophobia
	Conflict	Burka			Muslim Sport icons		Sport	Islamophobia, counter-terrorism, anti-terrorism and terrorism
	Sexuality	Comments on Islam and visits to Muslims events						Terrorism and racism
	UK foreign policy							
	Charity							

As opposed to mainstream press where security and terrorism mark the portrayal of Muslims and where the two topics are not covered in connection with Islamophobia, *the MN* puts anti-terrorism, counter-terrorism and Islamophobia at the centre of its coverage and refers to terrorism and extremism through them. This could suggest an apologetic stance by which *the MN* builds a causal link between Islamophobia (as well as the discriminatory aspect of anti-terrorism) and terrorism whereby the former is considered as a reason for the rise of the latter. As discussed below, this stands in stark contrast to mainstream press that underrepresent such topics (i.e. discrimination, Islamophobia) when covering terrorism. In foregrounding Islamophobia and backgrounding the security and terrorism news, *the MN* does not succumb to mainstream representations portraying Muslims as a security threat. It suggests that the high interest in Muslims portraying them as a security threat would only be understood as part of an Islamophobic matrix that pervades society, or at least could only be comprehended through the lenses of Islamophobia. The following three examples from a random sample of concordances containing the word *terrorism* within a sub-corpus of the editorials during the 7/7 period (extended to provide more context) clearly demonstrates this stance.

Extract 29:

« What is happening is that the whole focus of the Government's campaign is being aimed at the tenets of Islam, its religious leadership and places of worship. Its war against *terrorism* is directed at and equated with vague definitions of extremism. The Muslim community is not only tainted and targeted but is also being used, including by Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to justify the draconian measures. Blair's message that Muslims "know perfectly well how important it is to tackle terrorism" cannot be interpreted as indicating he has community support. » (*Not in our name*, **Editorial**, November 2005)

Extract 30:

« What the Pope<sup>35</sup> and other Christian leaders, as well as various political leaders are saying is that Islam will lead to a clash of not only civilizations, but also of Muslims and non-Muslims in the West. It leads to suppositions about what the so-called war on *terrorism* is really about, and whether, as many fear, it has a hidden agenda. It should not be necessary to remind both political and religious leaders that it is vitally important to respect each other's beliefs and not to demonise them for ulterior motives. As history relates, unlike the Pope's

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<sup>35</sup> In reference to the speech of Pope Benedict XVI in Cologne in September 2006 in which he claimed that what Prophet Mohamed taught was "only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."

quotation, Islam is a civilizing force and has influenced not only Christianity but Western thought as well. » (*Open season for attacking Islam*, **Editorial**, September 2006)

Extract 31:

« In arguing that the “key” to tackle *terrorism* and extremism is in “tightening our laws”, Home Secretary, Charles Clarke, has now revealed that the Government is considering giving the police controversial powers to close mosques. In yet another public relations exercise, he has presented proposals by way of a separate consultation paper under the masquerading heading of ‘Preventing Extremism Together – Places of Worship’. » (*Collective punishment*, **Editorial**, October 2005)

The criticism of vague and broad definitions when discussing terrorism (previously found in the editorial *Definition of Terrorism*) is extended in extract 29 to the definition of extremism. As with the criticism of the definition of terrorism, *the MN* believes that extremism has lost its capacity to be clearly defined and that it is used as an ideological tool for implementing a government policy deemed by Muslims as a “draconian measure”. This claim is not unfounded. Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery conclude that recurrent topics in mainstream press (such as extremism, fundamentalism and radicalism) are not clearly defined despite their prominent use in negatively representing Muslims (2013, p.149). They find that these concepts are not only left without a clear definition or distinction between them, but often appear without contextualization.

In newspapers, the main function of editorials is the “expression and construction of public opinion” (Van Dijk, 1995, p.1). They are one of the most important spaces in newspapers where ‘frames’ (Niblock and Machin, 2014, p.39) can be examined. News frames are recurrent simplified narratives that reported events and actors can fit into. For example, mainstream press are found to often fit stories about Muslims within the frame of Huntington’s clash of civilisation (Lewis, Mason and Moore, 2011, p.65). This frame of representation is alluded to in extract 30. In this extract, *the MN* challenges this binary mainstream representation on three levels. It first deconstructs the imagined homogeneity of Western societies by bringing attention to Muslims in ‘the West’ (referring to “Muslims and non-Muslims in the West”); hence locating Muslims inside ‘Western civilization’. It then denounces this narrative suggesting that it carries a feared “hidden agenda” used for “ulterior motives”. Finally, it delegitimizes it with the argument that Islam is not only part of ‘the West’ but also “a civilizing force” that has contributed to “Western thought”. While

criticizing this narrative, *the MN* uses it to highlight another: the demonization of Muslims, a topic emphasized throughout this editorial.

The way a story is framed shapes the central topic in it. As Bennett puts it, “*Framing* involves choosing an organizing theme that emphasizes some aspects of a situation while downplaying other information in a story” (2016, p.33). As such, the specific framing and organisation of a news story “takes on a distinct ideological significance” (Allan, 2004, p.75). In the three extracts above (extracts 29, 30 and 31), the response to terrorism (i.e. “government’s campaign” and “its war against terrorism”) is tied to an attack on Islam, its places of worship and leaders to “demonise” Muslims in Europe with the instrument of “vague definitions of extremism”. Terrorism becomes particularly newsworthy for *the MN* by virtue of the response to it being interpreted as an attack on Islam and Muslims. *The MN* strategy of decentring terrorism and extremism and centring Islamophobia and anti-terrorism is further observed in the choice of headlines.

While editorials set ideological frames for the news stories, headlines in general (and editorials’ headlines specifically) are key in signalling these frames. As Allan states, headlines “set down the ideological criteria by which the reader is to ‘make sense’ of what follows” in the text (Ibid., p.101). As such, headlines influence the readers’ interpretation of the text by playing a crucial role in guiding their comprehension (Van Dijk, 1991, p.73). In most of the editorials across the 7/7 timeframe containing the word *terrorism*, their headlines foreground anti-terrorism and Islamophobia while imparting a critical stance towards them. *Terrorising terror*, *Open season for attacking Islam*, *Glorified terror laws* and *Collective punishment* are all headlines of editorials containing the word *terrorism* during the 7/7 timeframe. In choosing to refer to anti-terrorism (e.g. *terror laws*) and Islamophobia (e.g. *Open season for attacking Islam*) in the headlines, *the MN* places these two topics as principal topics or ‘key facts’ in its editorials discussing terrorism.

In fact, upon analysis of all editorials during the 7/7 period, they are found to discuss anti-terrorism views (delivered in speeches), policies and measures, criticizing them and suggesting that there is a political “hidden agenda”<sup>36</sup> behind them to “demonise Islam”<sup>37</sup> rather than to prevent terrorism. Referring to the speeches of political (e.g. George Bush) and religious leaders (e.g. the Pope) the editorials assert that their comments link terrorist attacks to Islam and Muslims. The texts suggest that the anti-terrorism agenda and the Western

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<sup>36</sup> *Terrorising terror*, **Editorial**, August 2006.

<sup>37</sup> *Open season for attack Islam*, **Editorial**, September 2006.



political and religious views that reinforce it create a juxtaposition between Islam and ‘the West’ and promote a “belief in Europe (...) that Islam cannot be part of the European/Western culture as it is irrational, preaches violence, and is not inclusive”<sup>38</sup>.

In discussing anti-terrorism, the editorials focus on the perceived or supposed *causes* and *consequences* of anti-terrorism on Muslims. Terrorism as a provoking cause of anti-terrorism laws and measures in and of itself is undermined by comparing its effect and the response to it to that of other events (e.g. “the risk of being involved in a train accident or run over on the road is statistically far greater”, “how many terrorist attacks would have to be carried out to equate with the destruction and civilian deaths in Lebanon caused by incessant indiscriminate Israeli bombings”). The *raison d’être* of anti-terrorism agenda is challenged by criticizing precautionary anti-terrorism measures for “causing chaos with thousands of flights being delayed or cancelled” and highlighting their inefficiency illustrated by “the record of previous false incidents”<sup>39</sup>. Anti-terrorism laws such as the Terrorism Act (2006) are described as “based upon a number of false premises” and to be “incompatible with human rights”<sup>40</sup>. The editorials suggest alternative reasons behind anti-terrorism laws and measures by speculating that terrorism alerts are “orchestrated to distract attention away from Israel’s slaughter in Lebanon”<sup>41</sup> and that anti-terrorism is a “misguided security strategy designed to protect leaders” by “searching for new fictional threats as a relic of the Cold War”<sup>42</sup>. Having questioned the cause of anti-terrorism, the editorials lead the readers to suppositions “about what the so-called war on terrorism is really about, and whether, as many fear, it has a hidden agenda”<sup>43</sup>.

By undermining terrorism as the reason or cause behind anti-terrorism, displaying the inefficiency of the latter, criticizing its incompatibility with human rights and presenting alternative reasons for this agenda, the editorials weaken the link between terrorism and anti-terrorism (as a political and legislative response to it). Instead, the articles suggest that the anti-terrorism agenda is not a mere response to terrorism and allow for the statement that “the war against terror is in reality a war against Islam and Muslims”.

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<sup>38</sup> *Open season for attack Islam*, **Editorial**, September 2006.

<sup>39</sup> *Terrorising terror*, **Editorial**, August 2006.

<sup>40</sup> *Glorified terror laws*, **Editorial**, April 2006.

<sup>41</sup> *Terrorising terror*, **Editorial**, August 2006.

<sup>42</sup> *Glorified terror laws*, **Editorial**, April 2006.

<sup>43</sup> *Open season for attack Islam*, **Editorial**, September 2006.

While challenging the causes of anti-terrorism, the editorials highlight the existing and potential dangers of anti-terrorism views, policies and measures, particularly on Muslims. The list of perceived and potential consequences of anti-terrorism laws and measures that the editorials present range from abuse of British Muslims' civil rights (e.g. stop and search, censorship, persecution, deportation), to damaging social inclusion (e.g. exclusion, division, alienation), to attacking places of worship (e.g. closing mosques) and risking the freedoms and rights of Muslims. Another dangerous effect on British Muslims that these editorials highlight is the continuing "disparaging and insensitive portrayal of Muslims".

These laws and measures are described with multiple pejorative adjectives such as "draconian", "wrong and offensive", "ill-conceived", "a recipe for disaster as well as a huge blow to our freedoms"<sup>44</sup>, "extreme", "excessive" and "counterproductive"<sup>45</sup>.

In addition to their consequences on Muslims in Britain, the negative effects of the 'War on Terror' on Muslims outside of Britain are set out in these editorials (e.g. "invading and bombing Muslim countries", "suppressing any support for the Palestinians and others seeking to liberate their homeland", "stifling legitimate support for the oppressed Muslims" and "self-determination struggles around the world"<sup>46</sup>).

In mainstream press, however, such criticism of the 'War on Terror', Islamophobia and its consequences on Muslims inside and outside Britain is framed as a "grievance culture". Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery find mainstream press articles that mention the effects of the 'War on Terror' on Muslims to do so in the context of reports about the views of Muslims and Muslim leaders who consider that these effects contribute to radicalisation and terrorism, implying that they use these effects as a "convenient excuse" for radicalisation (2013, p.226). When quoting such opinions, mainstream newspapers distance themselves from this view using different distancing strategies. In mainstream press, when views on alternative causes of extremism – the recurrent one being strong *Islamic* beliefs (with *extremism* collocating the most with *Islamic*), are not expressed with distancing strategies: they are simply excluded. In her analysis of mainstream newspapers, Poole finds that other narratives, such as considering the alienation of Muslims in the UK a factor in increasing extremism, are "omitted from the discussion" (2002, p.125).

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<sup>44</sup> *Glorified terror laws*, **Editorial**, April 2006.

<sup>45</sup> *Collective punishment*, **Editorial**, October 2005.

<sup>46</sup> *Glorified terror laws*, **Editorial**, April 2006.

In *the MN* editorials, terrorism is backgrounded in the stories, events and opinions that the editorials present. Anti-terrorism becomes the central topic by virtue of its contestation, questioning its motifs and denouncing its consequences. Unlike in mainstream press, terrorism in these editorials signifies the terrorizing effects of anti-terrorism on British Muslims. In condemning laws against the glorification of terror and their disastrous consequences, *the MN* suggests that the terror lies in glorifying these laws and deploying them to demonize Muslims. The articles paint a picture of British Muslims as victims of wanton attacks and against whom anti-terrorism agendas are “directed”. Muslims become subject to “collective punishment” without any qualms and the war against terrorism becomes a terrorizing war against Islam and Muslims.

Nevertheless, the focus on news characterized by anti-terrorism, Islamophobia and discrimination keeps Muslims within the same frames of representation as those observed in mainstream press. The association made between news on terrorism attacks and news on Islamophobia attacks, and the connection established between anti-terrorism and cases of legal discrimination against Muslims contribute to the problematisation of Muslims by keeping them at the centre of ‘bad news’. So why does *the MN*, wittingly or unwittingly, perpetuate these negative frames of representation?

Galtung and Ruge (1965) outline a list of factors that help journalists and editors determine the newsworthiness of a story and guide them throughout the selection of news stories. To interpret the recurrence of certain topics in *the MN* corpus, it is important to revisit Galtung and Ruge’s factors in light of more recent critical studies that look at the news selection process in the British press.

First, *the MN*, being a local newspaper, operates in an industry environment where conflict, terrorism and violence stories mark the portrayal of Muslims in mainstream press (Lewis, Mason and Moore, 2011). *The MN* might be emphasising these stories and their impact on Muslims to stay in line with the emerging news stories found in mainstream press. As Harcup and O'Neill show, following up on stories about subjects that are already reported in the news is one of the selection factors that journalists and editors use to assess news values (2001, p.278). Furthermore, the relevance criterion implies that selected stories should concern “issues, groups and nations perceived to be relevant to the audience” (Ibid., p.279) and that they impinge on “the news audience’s lives and experiences” (Allan, 2010, p.72). In the case of *the MN*, the audience (i.e. British Muslims) being at the same time the object of increased

mainstream press reporting, are also consuming mainstream press and possibly anticipate and demand a response from *the MN* to mainstream representations of them. The recurrence of such topics could therefore be explained by the need of *the MN* to respond to perceived expectations from its readers to take a stance against the contentious issue of terrorism and/or to defend Muslims.

To test this hypothesis, a sub-corpus of the **Letters** section in *the MN* was built and examined to see whether such topics emerge as being of interest to *the MN* readership. Considering that topics of Islamophobia, anti-terrorism and discrimination became prominent starting from the Iraq sub-corpus, the letters from March 2003 to December 2009 (Iraq to Gaza) were compiled to build the **Letters** sub-corpus. The word list presents the words *Muslim* and *Muslims* as the top words in this sub-corpus. The word sketch of each word suggests that the words appear mainly as subjects of passive verbs, with the most collocating verb, *to be*, appearing as an auxiliary in passive constructions. A random sample of ten concordances for this collocate with the word *Muslims* suggests that the covered topics are of relevance to *the MN* readers. In 8 out of 10 concordances, the words within the five-words-span refer to terrorism, war, crime, intolerance, atrocities and hatred.

#### Concordances 1: Random sample of the verb *to be* collocating with *Muslims* in **Letters**

File ID	Concordance
file5567895	December 22, ‘Six imams...’), not because <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> doing anything illegal, but because
file5567895	they happened to be Muslims. Hundreds of <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> detained at airports in the US and
file5567903	contradiction between Islam and Western secularism. <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> torn between two types of loyalties
file5567909	responsible for the killings. But mainly <b>Muslims</b> <i>were</i> punished by Europeans by creating
file5567924	Jews of today. This is just the beginning. <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> discriminated, attacked, abused etc
file5567927	Sir, I didn’t realise that the attacks on <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> continuing and if your reports are
file5568076	Muslims will mean that soon they will say <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> recruited by extremists in the nurseries
file5568100	Muslims. They have more arsenal than those <b>Muslims</b> who have <i>been</i> convicted under terrorism
file5568105	according to Kofi Annan. Why is it that the <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> expected to apologise for the death
file5568106	from the usual tirade of abuse, ie, that all <b>Muslims</b> <i>are</i> fanatics, women are oppressed etc.

A third factor that can explain the prominence of these news stories in *the MN* is the importance of ‘bad news’ in the media industry. Negativity is one of the principles of news

values and negative news have a higher newsworthiness than positive news (Galtung and Ruge, 1965, p.69). ‘Bad news’ sell and reporting negative events “is what newspapers do for a living” (Partington, 2015, p.241). This fully applies to mainstream reports about extremism and terrorism which, in addition to their ‘negativity’, spread fear among readers which, in turn, heightens the readers interest in what is being reported. Fear, in a way, is the glue that makes the reporting stick.

The fourth criterion that could be applied in selecting stories on terrorism and Islamophobia in *the MN* is the newspaper agenda whereby stories are selected because they “set or fit the news organisation’s own agenda” (Harcup and O’Neill, 2001, p.279). The stories therefore serve “to promote commercial interests and/or reader loyalty and identification” (Ibid., p.276). This is also connected to the readers’ relevance criterion tested with the **Letters** sub-corpus where *the MN* appears to respond to its readers’ interest.

Ignoring a topic that is trendy and important in the media industry, relevant to the readers and to the newspaper’s agenda and of national interest is problematic. A strategy of avoidance by the leading newspaper for British Muslims could make the newspaper subject to criticism on the grounds of complicity or condonement. British Muslim voices are expected and called on to condemn terrorism. As Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery (2013) show, the word *condemn* is the most frequent collocate of *Muslim leaders*. Mainstream press “reports an expectation that Muslim leaders *should* be engaged in condemning (terrorist attacks), and that some people have accused them of not being condemnatory enough” (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.138). In fact, the study finds the focus of mainstream press on Muslim leaders to have been increasing as the debate on “whether they were condemning the attacks sufficiently” developed. “Clearly, a Muslim leader’s condemnation (or lack of it) counts as newsworthy” (Ibid.). In avoiding such a prominent media topic, *the MN* as a leading media platform for British Muslims could be accused of complicity by omission rather than complicity by commission. It could be criticized for its silence rather than for its outspokenness, as mainstream newspapers expect Muslim voices to speak up against terrorism. In covering these topics, *the MN* responds to mainstream press expectation and construction of Muslim leaders’ main role: to speak about terrorism and condemn it.

Although *the MN* also speaks about anti-terrorism and Islamophobia and condemns them while deploying the terrorism discourse disseminated in mainstream press, the newspaper keeps Muslims within the same framework of representation present in the mainstream press.

It uses the mainstream newsworthiness of a few Muslim terrorists to highlight the penalty most British Muslims pay in light of media coverage and governmental response to terrorism. However, the question arises as to the extent to which *the MN* tracks the mainstream news in the topics it covers. In particular, we may ask here if *the MN* tries to shift its reporting in a direction which, while still related to the reporting in the mainstream newspapers, tries to counter the images being created herein with counter images that seek to present a positive portrayal of Muslims taking them outside the loop of terrorism, Islamophobia, anti-terrorism and discrimination. The recurrence of another topic, sport, suggests a new framework of portrayal that offers alternative representations as I will attempt to show in the next chapter.

## Chapter Four

### **Sport: Celebrating Muslims' Victory on the Media Pitch**

In the previous chapter, I outlined and discussed recurrent topics across years in *the MN*. It became clear that along with the intertwined topics of Islamophobia, terrorism, racism and anti-terrorism, the only other topic that is referred to by key keywords in later years of analysis (from 2005 onwards) that recurs in *the MN* is sport. This correlation is shown in Table 14 (in the previous chapter). *The MN* interest in sport could be explained as a reflection of the interest of mainstream press in it. The importance accorded to sport in mainstream news reporting derives, to a large extent, from its entertaining aspect, and the pervasive power of entertainment in newspapers. Entertainment “proved to be pervasive in all newspapers. [to the extent that] no contemporary set of news values is complete without an “entertainment” factor” (Harcup and O’Neill, 2001, p.277). Throughout its history, the British press has been increasing its emphasis on entertainment which underpins the ubiquitous prosaic aspect of popular journalism. This follows a change in the editorial choices in journalism that resulted in giving more news value to commercial stories (e.g. sport, news about the royal family, celebrities’ relationships etc...) over hard news of social, political or economic relevance (Franklin, 1997). In the 1990, market demand and financial constraints pushed newspapers to cut editorial costs, move away from hard news and increase their coverage of short entertainment stories to leave more space for advertisement and pictures (Franklin and Murphy, 1998, p.17). With the commercialisation of the media by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the promising profits of sport news contributed to changing the perception of sport as a trivial matter in journalism with insignificant news value (Boyle, 2006, p.94).

*The MN* increased interest in sport seems to follow mainstream tendencies. However, the omnipresence of sport as a topic in several stories reported by *the MN* in the period between 2006 and 2009 is striking, especially when considering that sport does not appear as newsworthy when reporting about Muslims in UK mainstream press. In fact, ethnic minorities are usually underrepresented in sport whether as fans, spectators, active participants or decision makers (Wachter, Franke and Purski, 2009, p.37). The increased coverage of sport news stories in *the MN* throughout the years, and the multiplication of

articles about sport in the period between 2006 and 2009 as opposed to other periods of analysis, is particularly exceptional and worthy of further examination.

Looking at the sport articles in *the MN* corpus, the **Sports** section is found to be first introduced in 1999 with only three articles published in that year. However, the section later developed to include several articles, reaching a peak of 75 articles in 2007 as set out in table 1 below.

Table 1: Number of articles under the **Sports** section across years

Year	Number of articles under Sports section
1999	3
2000	3
2006	39
2007	75
2008	43
2009	32

Sport stories become recurrent from the 7/7 period onwards. Besides the articles appearing under the **Sports** section, the topic is also present in stories under the **Home News**, **Brief News** and **Top Stories** columns which explains the appearance of several key keywords referring to sport stories across sections in the sub-corpora starting from 2006 onwards. The stories examined through keywords refer mainly to Muslims excelling in sport and winning championships. When looking at the key keywords, the sports that are the most reported are boxing, Mixed Martial Arts, cricket and football as demonstrated by table 2. The sport with the highest presence (as per the aggregate frequencies of its keywords) is boxing. The keywords referring to boxing have almost the same presence as those referring to the other three sports (Martial Arts, cricket and football) combined, as seen in the chart below. Other sports *the MN* shows interest in are Tennis, squash and running.



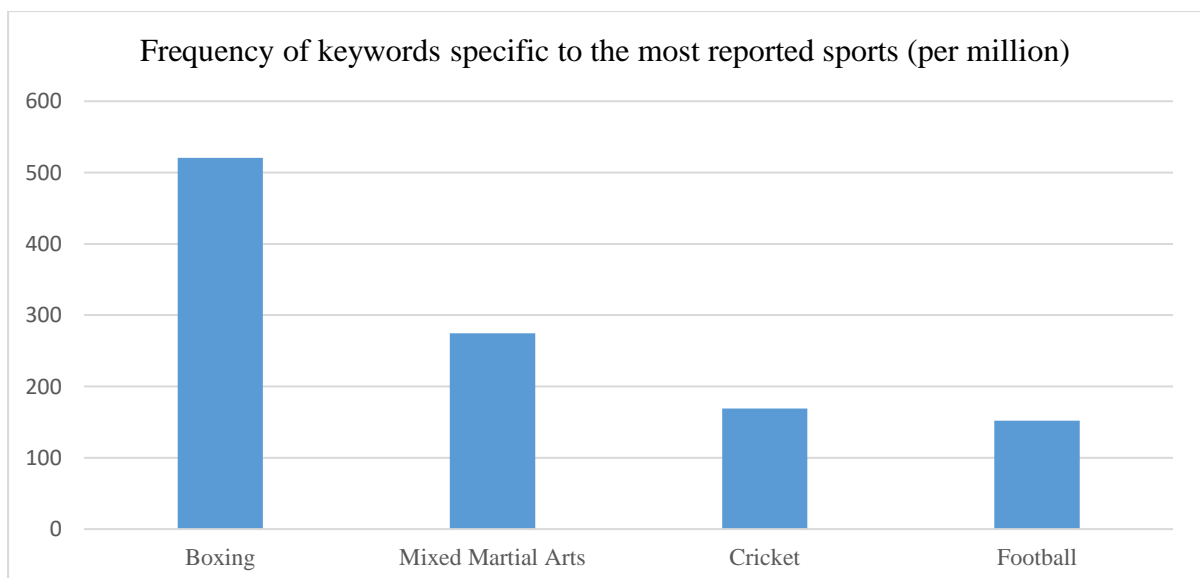
Table 2: Keywords referring to sports across periods

Period Sub- corpus	Keyword	Freq/ Mill	Story/Event	Sports	Topic
Madrid	<i>Tunggal</i>	15.6	Muslim women winning sports competitions		Muslims excelling in Sport
	<i>Silat</i>	104.0	British Muslims, mainly women, excelling in Pencak Silat (Islamically inspired Martial Art)	Martial Art	
	<i>Pencak</i>	85.8	First Muslim woman to win Pencak Silat Championship	Martial Art	
	<i>PSF</i>	33.8	The Pencak Silat Federation of the UK	Martial Art	
	<i>Shajaad</i>	18.2	Shajaad Khan, father of Amir Khan, the Youngest English boxer in Olympics	Boxing	
7/7	<i>Materazzi</i>	13.3	Marco Materazzi Football player head butted by Zinedine Zidane, a Muslim football player	Football	Muslim Sport icons
	<i>Skelton</i>	114.9	Matt Skelton, a Commonwealth heavyweight champion who fought against Danny Williams, a British Muslim boxing champion	Boxing	
Debate on veil	<i>ODIs</i>	42.53	A One Day International (ODI) – cricket	Cricket	Sport
	<i>Indies</i>	126.6	The West Indies cricket team in the international cricket council winning the ICC Champions Trophy	Cricket	
	<i>WBC</i>	109.7	WBC World Boxing Council	Boxing	
	<i>Sanders</i>	50.6	Corey Sanders fighting against Muslim convert Mike Tyson (Boxing)	Boxing	

Somalia	<i>Ibragimov</i>	38.3	Sultan Ibragimov Muslim Russian heavyweight boxer winning the World Boxing Organisation heavyweight title	Boxing	Sport
	<i>Cage</i>	30.36	Cage Rage	Mixed	
	<i>Rage</i>	26.0	Mixed Martial Arts promotion	Martial Art	
	<i>UFC</i>	24.84	The Ultimate Fighting Championship of Mixed Martial Arts	Mixed Martial Art	
	<i>Semi</i>	16.4	Semi-finals of various competitions		
	<i>Nasri</i>	16.4	Samir Nasri Muslim French footballer	Football	
	<i>Platov</i>	20.70	Oleg Platov Boxer who fought against Muslim heavy weight Champion Danny Williams	Boxing	
	<i>Earl</i>	19.32	Graham Earl English lightweight boxer who fought Muslim world boxing champion Amir Khan in 2007	Boxing	
	<i>BRONZE</i>	34.50	Bronze medallist in different sports competitions		
	<i>Gomez</i>	40.02	Michael Gomez British boxer who lost against Muslim boxer Amir Khan in 2008	Boxing	
	<i>Limond</i>	37.26	Willie Limond British boxer who fought against Muslim boxer Amir Khan	Boxing	
	<i>Holyfield</i>	24.6	Evander Holyfield American boxer who fought against several Muslim boxers	Boxing	

	Hotspur	31.74	Tottenham Hotspur Football Club in the Premier League	Football	
	Wenger	16.56	Arsene Wenger Manager of Arsenal football club	Football	
	Lawton	15.18	Scott Lawton British boxer who fought against Muslim boxer Amir Khan	Boxing	
	Woolmer	19.32	Bob Woolmer Death of cricket coach	Cricket	
	Kolo	70.37	Kolo Touré Muslim footballer in Liverpool club	Football	
	Trotters	12.42	Nickname of Bolton Wanderers Football Club	Football	
	Kanoute	39.7	Frédéric Kanouté Muslim footballer	Football	
	Calzaghe	52.44	Joseph Calzaghe Welsh boxer who fought against Muslim convert Bernard Humphrey Hopkins	Boxing	

Chart: Total frequency of keywords referring to specific sports



To further examine this topic, all articles appearing under the **Sports** section from 2006 to 2009, the period in which the topic becomes prominent, were compiled in a sub-corpus (189 articles). The sub-corpus was then compared to another sub-corpus that contains all *the MN* articles for the same period, excluding the ones in the **Sports** section. This allows the identification of the keywords of the sub-corpus Sport which determine its unique ‘aboutness’.

The most important keywords refer to the names of sportsmen (e.g. *Shoaib Akhtar*) and sportswomen (e.g. *Sania Mirza*), sport championships (e.g. *Premiership*), different types of sports (e.g. *Tennis*, *Squash*) and sport-related nouns (e.g. *skipper*, *goal keeper*). The most frequent words in the Sports sub-corpus indicate a general tendency of reporting sport competitions and their results with words such as *first*, *title*, *win*, *world*, *cup*, *second*, *last*, *champion*, *game*, *round*, *final* and *season*.

Unlike most news stories (including conflict and legal cases stories) where the results of a process are not presented in a clear-cut way and where there is always continuity to the story, sport news provide a resolution. They provide a clear chronology of the actions taking place during a competition and include a resolution: the game’s results. The results of a sport game are reported as final while the result of a conflict for instance are usually reported as part of a continuing narrative. As such, sport competitions provide a ‘good’ story to tell. As Bell shows, sport news, unlike all other news, have a chronological structure similar to personal narratives (1991, p.154). They contain all the elements that allow reporters to tell a story, creating a ‘male soap opera’ (O’Connor and Boyle, 1993, p.112): popular characters, a clear storyline, suspense and a climax with the revelation of the results (Kinkema and Harris, 1998, p.32). Sports news provide a good story on a structural level: one that is completed with all the elements of storytelling, has a clear direction, and ends with a resolution. As Bell puts it “Sport makes good news just because there is always result” (1991, p.154). With their resolutions, sport news are different from hard news (such as politics and conflict news) where the audience faces an unfinished (unresolved) story.

As such, the increased reporting of sports competitions and news could be a manifestation of *the MN*’s attempt to offer ‘good’ news to Muslims. In fact, in the period between 2005 and 2006 marked by 7/7 and the debate on the veil, most topics referred to by keywords address conflict (Israel/Palestine, Isreal/Lebanon), Islamophobia (Islamophobia, Danish cartoon, discrimination), legal cases, terrorism (anti-terrorism, London bombings), Muzaffarabad

earthquake and the debate on the veil. The only three topics that refer to less controversial, violent or negative news in 2005 and 2006 are sport, education and the story of a Muslim economist, Muhammad Yunus, winning the Nobel Prize.

However, upon closer analysis of the concordances of the keywords with which these three topics emerge, the stories related to education in that period are also found to be connected to some of the negative news outlined above as demonstrated in the extracts below containing the keyword *packs* in the Debate on Veil period. The stories tackle the issue of teaching materials related to terrorism or anti-terrorism (e.g. *Teaching packs based on 9/11 withdrawn from school and Information*<sup>47</sup> and *Packs sent to schools to deal with backlash to the anti-terror raids*<sup>48</sup>). And while the story about Muhammad Yunus receiving the Nobel Peace Prize as a single event disappears in the following periods, stories about Muslim sport champions multiply and reach a peak in 2007. Hence, Sports appears to be the only topic to display positive and sustained news to Muslims across periods from 2005 onwards.

Extract 1:

« Teaching *packs* based on the September 11 atrocities, which invited pupils to imagine organising a terrorist attack, have been withdrawn from schools. » (*Brief news UK, Home News*, October 2006)

Extract 2:

« Schools throughout High Wycombe have been warned to be on alert for any backlash to the anti-terror raids as children return to their classrooms in September. Information *packs* have been sent to all the schools to help teachers identify issues that may come up with pupils and offer guidance on how to resolve them<sup>49</sup>. » (*Schools alert over terror backlash, Home News*, October 2006)

The emphasis on sports stories is not only explained by *the MN* possible attempt to provide positive news to Muslims. It also reveals the newspaper's strategic choice of providing positive news about Muslims. As keywords of the Sport sub-corpus show, the news focus on Muslim sport champions, celebrating their excellence and success in various sports competition. The multiplication and endurance of sport news following 7/7 suggest a

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<sup>47</sup> Articles about the withdrawal of teaching packs that invited pupils to imagine a terrorist attack and were criticized for potentially glorifying terrorism.

<sup>48</sup> Information packs sent to schools to help teachers respond to students concerned with anti-terror raids.

<sup>49</sup> High Wycombe is a large village in southern England where anti-terror raids took place in summer 2006 investigating alleged terror plots.

sustained tendency in presenting an alternative framework of reporting about Muslims in *the MN* beyond Islamophobia, legal cases and terrorism. This represents Muslims in a new framework that is not observed in mainstream press. It portrays Muslims outside the ‘terrorism conditionality’ and suggests that they are newsworthy outside conflict, terrorism and Islamophobia. Sports news become the antithetical response to ‘bad news’: the more ‘bad news’ about Muslims are disseminated in *the MN* with stories on Islamophobia, conflict and legal cases about discrimination, the more news about sports become recurrent. Sports could therefore become ‘the discursive site’ or arena (Foucault, 1972) for Muslims to feel good about themselves. The Sports section constitutes the space for Muslim readers of *the MN* where the ‘good news’ they are part of can be reported. In fact, in over half of the 13 concordances where the word *Muslims* appears in this sub-corpus, adjectives and verbs with positive connotations appear within the five words span including *inspire*, *exciting*, *safe*, *sociable*, *superb* and *great* as outlined in the concordances below.

#### Concordances: *Muslims* in Sport

File ID	Concordance		
file3161787	safe and sociable environment for young	<b>Muslims</b>	to participate in football. Speaking exclusively
file3161796	great with lots of exciting action. For	<b>Muslims</b>	playing in the Premiership, the month has
file3161796	getting dropped, but generally, the other	<b>Muslims</b>	playing in the Premiership have been superb
file3161798	associations seem ready to give them a chance,	<b>Muslims</b>	can look to the future and hope that maybe
file3161801	in the UK, many of whom are young British	<b>Muslims</b>	. Notable performances from the British
file3161835	said he aimed to be a role model for young	<b>Muslims</b>	and help bridge Australia’s cultural divide
file3161835	hoped it would inspire other Australian	<b>Muslims</b>	to reach for their dreams. “It is huge
file3161835	said. “It also opens up the way for other	<b>Muslims</b>	around the community to know they can make
file3161836	Middle East there’s a wave of sympathy for	<b>Muslims</b>	in Ireland. There should be no problem
file3161867	determination this year not to make Ramadan, when	<b>Muslims</b>	abstain from liquids and food during daylight
file3161879	of games during the 12th Annual European	<b>Muslims</b>	Women’s Sports Tournament held at the Deepings
file3161902	not uncommon to find one rule applying to	<b>Muslims</b>	whilst finding that a completely different
file3161958	embraced a team made up almost entirely of	<b>Muslims</b>	. Souths Chairman, Haisam Allouche, said

As discussed above, sports news share a similar structure as that of story-telling narratives where a resolution is offered and ‘identification’ is established with the help of personified stories that journalists write when covering sports news (Schudson, 1989, p.277). With its focus on stories about individual sports champions such as boxing and Mixed Martial Arts, sports news facilitate the identification among readers with the story, a function also served by the specific structure of sports news. Stories revolving around individuals allow the personification of the news and facilitate identification among readers (Schudson, 1982). This is particularly important when looking at the sports stories emphasized by *the MN*. The omnipresence of Muslims’ names as keywords in the Sports sub-corpus suggests that a large number of the stories in this section depict Muslim sport champions positively, presenting them as role models who succeed and can inspire other Muslims. This extends to stories about Muslim sport champions in collective sports (e.g. football) who are singled out as a model to follow as shown in two of the concordances from the above examples.

Concordances: Selected sample of concordances of *Muslims* in Sport

File ID	Concordance
file3161835	said he aimed to be a role model for young <b>Muslims</b> and help bridge Australia’s cultural divide
file3161835	hoped it would inspire other Australian <b>Muslims</b> to reach for their dreams. “It is huge

When extending these two concordances appearing in an article entitled *Faith drives Muslim footballer*, the reference to the footballer’s religion and commitment to his faith (e.g. fasting, praying...) are multiplied and highlighted as an inspiration to Australian young Muslims “to reach their dreams”.

Extract 3:

« Believed to be the first Muslim playing for AFL<sup>50</sup>, Houli said he aimed to be a role model for young **Muslims** and help bridge Australia’s cultural divide. The devout Muslim footballer will tell his Essendon team mates he prays five times a day, hates a beer and steers clear of nightclubs. Houli, 18, plans to observe religious fasts when it does not conflict with game day and to work at his parents’ Werribee fish and chip shop as often as he can. » (*Faith drives Muslim footballer*, **Sports**, January 2007)

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<sup>50</sup> Referring to the Australian Football League.

Extract 4:

« He confessed he was playing the sport when he brought home a bagful of trophies and received his parents' blessing. Houli said being drafted was a personal goal, but he hoped it would inspire other Australian *Muslims* to reach for their dreams. "It is huge for me", he said. "It also opens up the way for other Muslims around the community to know they can make the highest level." » (*Faith drives Muslim footballer*, **Sports**, January 2007)

In these passages, *the MN* refers to Houli's faith and religious practices as important factors contributing to his success and victory ("a bagful of trophies"). The regimented aspect of religious practices (praying five times a day, abstaining from alcohol and nightclubs, and fasting) validate Houli's self-discipline – a quality essential for sporting success. Being a devout Muslim becomes synonymous to a disciplined, trustworthy and motivated team member – in this case, a football player in the Australian Football League. As Baker puts it, "religion and sport seem to have been made in the image of each other. Both are bathed in myth and sustained by ritual; both reward faith and patience; both thrive on passion tempered with discipline" (Baker, 2009, p.2). *The MN* employs this dual significance of ritual, patience and discipline (in religion as in sport) to portray Islam as a driver of success rather than as the 'motivator' of hatred and terrorism. This stands in contrast to mainstream representations. While *devout* was found to refer to positive and negative meanings in mainstream press discourse about Muslims, it collocated the most with the words *described* and *regarded* in concordances suggesting that those who appear/are described as devout Muslims are in truth terrorists, or implying that they are not normal (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, pp.171-172). In this article, the devout Muslim is also not a normal person – s/he is a role model, a successful athlete, a sports champion. They represent a bridge across their societies' "cultural divide". Their devotion to Islam along with their active contribution to society present an example of integration, not assimilation. The personal dream of the devout Muslim champion ("personal goal") becomes extended to a communal one: Australian Muslims achieving their dreams of success.

To investigate the depiction of Muslims as role models in this small sub-corpus beyond a single story, the verb *inspire* was examined in the corpus. The verb *inspire* was found to have a higher frequency in this section-limited sub-corpus from 2006 to 2009 only (62.12 per million) than in *the MN* entire corpus of all the analysed years (50.08 per million). Interestingly, this finding is backed up by the investigation of other positive words appearing



in the concordances about *Muslims* in the Sports sub-corpus. The adjective *great* also has a higher appearance in this sub-corpus than the entire corpus of *the MN* (697.08 per million to 479.06 per million), and so does the word *exciting* (55.21 per million to 14.61 per million), *sociable* (6.90 per million to 1.79 per million) and *superb* (193.25 per million to 12.82 per million). Nearly all the positive verbs and adjectives collocating with the word *Muslims* in the Sport sub-corpus have a higher frequency in it than in *the MN* overall corpus. The Sports section appears to be the space where positive stories about successful Muslims who win championships are multiplied and their portrayal as role models is highlighted. In fact, both *successful* and *success* have a higher frequency in Sports than in *the MN* corpus and *champion* appears within the 100 top words in the word list of this sub-corpus. These icons of successful Muslims are represented, with reference to their faith and their success in sports, as role models that can be emulated as the heroes and representatives of Muslims in the national and international forums of sports competitions. The iconization of successful Muslims is discursively facilitated in Sports section because of sport news' "underlying heroic narratives of trial and tribulation, victory and defeat, humiliation and redemption" (Boyle and Haynes, 2009, p.90). As an arena of myth-making with heroes and symbols (Holt and Mangan, 2013, p.5), sport constitutes an effective space for celebrating Muslims' victory.

In expressing their faith and being representatives of Muslims at sports competitions as shown in the examples above, Muslim champions offer news stories where Muslims are competing and 'winning', fairly, rather than ideologically. One of the ten most frequent words in the Sport corpus is *win*. A random sample of concordances containing the word *win* suggests *the MN* focus on British and non-British Muslim sportsmen such as Bilal Shafayat<sup>51</sup>, Amir Khan<sup>52</sup> and Sultan Ibragimov<sup>53</sup> winning competitions. The extension of concordances in a random sample suggests an emphasis on portraying these Muslim sportsmen winning in competitions inside and outside the UK (e.g. Khan defeating Williams<sup>54</sup> and Fagan<sup>55</sup>, Shafayat winning a sports award and Ibragimov defeating Holyfield<sup>56</sup>). With its coverage of Ibragimov's wins, *the MN* shows interest in reporting about the victory of Muslim sport champions beyond the boundaries of the nation state, ethnicity and citizenship. Winning at different sports (cricket and boxing), the only characteristic these three

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<sup>51</sup> English cricketer.

<sup>52</sup> British boxer and former world champion.

<sup>53</sup> Russian boxer and former world champion.

<sup>54</sup> Referring to Jackson Williams, an English boxer.

<sup>55</sup> Referring to Oisín Fagan, an Irish boxer.

<sup>56</sup> Referring to Evander Holyfield, an American boxer and former world champion.

champions share is their religion (Islam) and, as seen in the concordances below, their victory.

Concordances: *win* in Sport

File ID	Concordance		
file3161814	European Cruiserweight title with a points	win	over Ismail Abdoul on July 21 in Manchester
file3161787	that he was “shocked” and didn’t expect to	win	the award, but was “proud and wanted to
file3161921	brutally one sided contest. It was Khan’s 19 <sup>th</sup>	win	in 20 fights and earned the Olympic silver
file3161842	vowed to continue boxing after his bid to	win	a world heavyweight title for a record
file3161786	happy about that.” Meanwhile, Amir Khan	won	the first title of his professional career

In the single case in this random selection where the loss of Muslims in sport has been reported (the first concordance, David Haye winning over Ismail Abdoul), *the MN* describes the victory as uninspiring (“*lacklustre*”) as revealed when extending the concordance.

Extract 5:

« David Haye retained his European Cruiserweight title with a points *win* over Ismail Abdoul on July 21 in Manchester. All three judges scored the contest 120-108 in favour of Haye. It was a rather lacklustre performance from Haye, who used his effective jab to keep Abdoul away. » (*Sports news in brief*, **Sports**, August 2006)

Sport, being “rooted in principles of fair play” (Whannel, 2005, p.4) and characterized by an “ethical structure of fair play” (Ibid., p.7), constitutes a space where Muslims’ victory can be celebrated ‘fairly’ as opposed to the discursive media field where, it is assumed, fair play and media integrity are not the norm. Where Muslims perceive loss and harm in their position in society (with reported Islamophobic attacks) or in the press representations of them (increased negative reporting), news about Muslims winning in fair play competitions could be the only discursive tool to leverage the place of Muslims in press and in society.

As such, sport allows for stories where British Muslims are positioned, ‘fairly’ and positively, at the centre of British society rather than being negatively placed at its periphery. This is clearly demonstrated when exploring the extracts containing concordances in which the word *fair* appears. An extract from an article on Muslim women organising Id Sports festival extends this notion of fairness to society using a verbal reaction from the Chief Executive of the Football Foundation.

Extract 6:

« Chief Executive of the Football Foundation, Paul Thorogood, said, “Sport has the power to unite people and this great project will ensure that Muslim women from towns and cities across the country join football in helping to build a more tolerant and *fair* society. » (*Muslim women organise Id sports festival*, **Sports**, November 2007)

Verbal reactions usually feature the opinions of important actors on news events. Their selection and placement within the text is not random – they are part of a controlled process in journalistic practices serving an argumentative function. As Smirnova shows in the study of British newspapers discourse, journalists “skillfully use reported discourses for their own argumentative goals. The target audience receives only the strictly dosed information on the initial utterance that serves as a confirmation of the journalist’s standpoint” (Smirnova, 2012, p.250). Quoting opinions of important actors is useful to journalists in transferring selected opinions and interpretations without taking responsibility for them (Van Dijk, 1991, p.120). By quoting the Chief Executive, *the MN* presents sport as a powerful tool for Muslims (*Muslim women*) to develop unity, tolerance and fairness in British society, without explicitly stating its standpoint. This is a useful strategy to outsource the transformation of a reported particular story into a general argument about a larger group or community. When reporting about a British Muslim teenager winning an international Karate competition, *the MN* quotes the founder of the foundation in which the teenager was trained, while indicating his authoritative status.

Extract 7:

« Arabic Cultural Foundation Founder and Secretary, Abdul Habair, said, “Our new champion is an example of what the Muslim youth, in the right environment, can do for our country.” » (*Boy wonder Saleh takes US by storm*, **Sports**, August 2006)

In this article, *the MN* summarizes the rest of the founder’s speech and chooses to quote only this utterance. The quote labels the Muslim teenager as a “champion” and an “example” of other Muslim youth. While “the right environment” is not defined in the article, the quoted commentary on the champion’s success is geared towards showcasing the potential of Muslim youth in being champion representatives of Britain internationally. They are “our new champion” demonstrating what they “can do for our country”.

As such, the omnipresence of sport could also be an attempt to depict Muslims as part of the British contemporary society as opposed to being a separate community within it. “Sport plays a significant role in cultural life. Its major traditional rituals (...) are a significant part of the cultural history of the nation, and form part of the fabric of ‘Englishness’, contributing to a sense of national identity” (Whannel, 2005, p.3). When the popular view is that “there is no common ground between the West and Islam, and that conflict between them is accordingly inevitable” (Greater London Authority, 2007, p.113), sport becomes a common interest that unites British citizens regardless of their religion. It is an interest shared by the masses in British society. Hence, “sport is a forum that allows the construction of the nation as ‘us’ – rising above and displacing whatever ‘minor’ internal divisions there may be” (Clarke and Clarke, 2014, pp.65-66). In the Sport sub-corpus, *British* collocates the most with *heavyweight*, *title* and *champion*. In all the concordances where *British heavyweight* (the strongest collocation) appears, the analysis of the extended texts shows a focus on Muslim champions in British heavyweight competitions, and in 11 of the 14 concordances, the story centres around Danny Williams, a British professional boxer and a Muslim convert. He is also the main actor in most of the articles containing the collocation *British champion* along with Amir Khan, another British Muslim champion whose name appears as one of the key words in *the MN* overall corpus when compared to four different reference corpora. Danny Williams, a British heavyweight Black Muslim convert, shares several characteristics with “The Greatest” boxer in the history of the sport game, another heavyweight Black Muslim convert: Muhammad Ali. In fact, Williams’ most celebrated victory is his defeat of Mike Tyson in 2004 at Louisville, the same arena where Ali made his debut. Beyond his outstanding sport performances, Ali was celebrated as a voice for Muslims in ‘the West’, asserting himself on a national level, but also internationally. Ali’s outstanding popularity as a Muslim boxer and a role model could have inspired British Muslim boxers reported in *the MN* (e.g. Danny Williams and Amir Khan), who in turn are represented as inspiring British champions in *the MN*. In fact, Ali, a Muslim sport champion, has been a defining figure of boxing who repetitively attributed his success in sport (boxing) to his faith (Islam).

## Concordances: *British heavyweight*

File ID	Concordance	Actor
file3161814	get has career back on track when he faces	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> champion Scott Gammer Danny Williams (British Muslim champion) on October
file3161810	Boxing Danny Williams has withdrawn from his	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> title fight with Scott Gammer Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)
file3161878	Alturk will challenge for the Cage Rage	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> title against Tengiz Mostapha Alturk (Muslim champion and member of the heavyweight British team) Edoradze
file3161881	was controversially beaten by Cage Rage	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> champion Tengiz Mostapha Alturk (Muslim champion and member of the heavyweight British team) Edoradze on
file3161892	continue fighting Danny Williams regained the	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> crown with a ninth-round knockout Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)
file3161892	ninth round knockout of previously unbeaten	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> champion Scott Gammer, Danny Williams (British Muslim champion) but
file3161901	B Danny vows to carry on despite setback	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> champion Danny Williams's future Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)
file3161901	was in for a tough night. The reigning	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> king Danny Williams Danny Williams (British Muslim champion) looked
file3161901	and that's only because he is still the	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> champion. Despite the Danny Williams (British Muslim champion) loss
file3161936	for nearly four months, the 34-year-old	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> champion from Brixton, Danny Williams (British Muslim champion) who
file3161936	champion McDermott, is a popular figure on the	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> scene with a record of 25-3 Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)
file3161961	Ruslan Chagaev as a replacement opponent for	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> David Haye. The IBF, Muslim, defeating British non-Muslim Michael Sprott) WBO and
file3161964	the quarter-finals. Williams, the reigning	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> champion and bookies favourite Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)
file3161965	Danny Williams escaped being stripped of his	<b>British</b> <i>heavyweight</i> title, but must next face Danny Williams (British Muslim champion) the

## Concordances: *British champion*

File ID	Concordance	Actor
file3161901	and that's only because he is still the <b>British</b> heavyweight <i>champion</i> . Despite the loss	Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)
file3161936	for nearly four months, the 34-year-old <b>British</b> heavyweight <i>champion</i> from Brixton, who	Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)
file3161948	Khan held firm to become the third youngest <b>British</b> world <i>champion</i> since the Second World War	Amir Khan (British Muslim champion)
file3161957	of pain." The East Londoner, who is the <b>British</b> super-featherweight <i>champion</i> and has won	Amir Khan (British Muslim champion)
file3161964	the quarter-finals. Williams, the <b>British</b> heavyweight <i>champion</i> and favourite	Danny Williams (British Muslim champion)

The reference to British Muslims in this corpus is not limited to individual champions. Articles about British teams also draw attention to Muslim members, as in the following extract from a 2006 article on Pencak Silat<sup>57</sup> championships.

Extract 8:

« The *British team* members reflected the many cultural and faith communities participating in Pencak Silat in the UK, many of whom are young British Muslims. » (*Pencak Silat championships*, **Sports**, August 2006)

While highlighting the participation of young British Muslims, extract 8 refers to multiculturalism in the UK, reflected in the diversity of the team ("many cultural and faith communities"). Multiculturalism, a flagship governmental policy in the UK under Labour governance (1994 – 2010), is based on the fundamental principle of integration, rather than assimilation (Modood, 2007, pp.46-50). Multiculturalism acknowledges cultural differences and celebrates the value and contribution of different faith traditions to British life. As Meer and Modood state, at a time where Muslims in the UK have been increasingly demonised in the media, "the relationship between Muslims and multiculturalism in Britain has become increasingly interdependent" (2009, p.481) for multiculturalism stands in opposition to othering different groups or denouncing their cultural and religious practices. In fact, Muslim voters supported the Labour government in the 2005 elections, as the party not only promoted

<sup>57</sup> Pencak Silat is a class of related martial arts originating in Indonesia.

multiculturalism but also included a few Muslim candidates in its composition (e.g. Yasmin Qureshi, Khalid Mahmood and Shahid Malik).

Team sports emerge as an arena where this government vision is modelled, where the celebration of national identity and the acknowledgment of the contribution of diverse communities are not mutually exclusive. In fact, “with its visibility and focus on symbols, winning, competition, partisan fans – and in team games the necessity of collective struggle – few other cultural forms lend themselves as easily as sport to being used as an indicator of certain national characteristics and, by extension, of being representative of a national identity” (Boyle and Haynes, 2009, p.144). With its apparent separateness from the contestations and controversy characterizing political news, sport ‘banalizes’ British Muslims, normalizes their belonging to their country and unites them with the rest of British society through this shared interest. This is reinforced in reporting about team sports where team work is highlighted and differences amongst players within one team disappear. In fact, the most important modifier collocating with the team sport *football* is *English* and a third of the *English football* concordances demonstrate the emphasis put by *the MN* on Muslims’ belonging to English teams while highlighting the value of Muslim players in them, as in the following extract from an interview with a Muslim footballer entitled: *I am what I am because of my religion says Kolo Touré*<sup>58</sup>.

Extract 9:

« When I joined it was very difficult to get into the team. In the academy I was a defender, but when I joined there were so many other good defenders, like Keown and Adams, and so the boss told me he’d play me in the middle as we had some injuries in the midfield at the time. I just wanted to play so I was happy to do that and proud to be playing,” Kolo explained. The 2003/04 season proved to be one of the most memorable for Kolo as Arsenal became the first team to go undefeated in the top flight of English football for more than 100 years. » (*I am what I am because of my religion says Kolo Touré*, **Sports**, October 2008)

In fact, the title *the MN* chooses for this interview reinforces the connection between faith and sport. Just like Ali, Touré states that Islam is what makes him a successful sportsman. He is not winning in spite of being Muslim, he is successful, as he indicates, “because of my religion”. While showcasing the excellence of Touré when reporting the success of the

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<sup>58</sup> A Muslim football player from Ivory Coast who played in Arsenal and Manchester City teams during the analysed timeframe.

English team, and the victory of Williams as a British champion, *the MN* highlights the belonging, integration and value of Muslim players in British sports and celebrates their successes in individual sports as well as when they are part of a team. Sport becomes a model of integration that showcases diversity in unity and depicts people coming from diverse backgrounds to achieve one goal beyond ethnicity and religion. Sport offers the popular forum where ethnic and religious differences are singled out to be celebrated rather than being discussed as controversial as in other spaces (e.g. politics). Previous research shows that team sports, such as football, are “used as examples of how people of different ethnicities can work together in harmony to achieve success” (Johnson, 2009, p117). In fact, football (along with education) has been an important arena for organisations campaigning against exclusion and discrimination to combat anti-Muslim rhetoric (Wachter, Franke and Purski, 2009). The Loughborough *Widening Access Through Sport* project (WATS), for example, which run educational and sport activities for British youngsters from minority backgrounds worked the most with young Muslims (Kay, 2007, p.126).

However, while team sport news can facilitate a discourse of integration and national unity, a close look at the collocates of the word *team* reveals an unexpected collocating modifier. *National*, *first* and *football* all refer to different *national* teams that came *first* in *football* or other sports. But a distinct collocate refers to a particular team and country: *Pakistan*. *Pakistan* scores as the second most important collocate to the word *team* after *national*. While *national* refers to several teams (e.g. *Iran*, *Israel*, *Iraqi*, *Arab*, *Cameroon*, *German*, *Pakistan*, *India*, *Kenya* and *English*), the interest in the Pakistan team is specific and striking. In 88% of the concordances, the text refers to cricket news. A random example of the concordances in which *Pakistan team* appears suggests a high coverage of Test cricket<sup>59</sup>. More predominantly, an interest in Pakistan Cricket Board<sup>60</sup> and in players and coaches of Pakistan cricket team such as Shoaib Akhtar (whose name also appears as one of the keywords in the corpus) is observed in these examples. *Pakistan* is also the most important collocate of *Cricket*.

Unlike most articles in *the MN Sports* section where British Muslim sportswomen and men are celebrated in its coverage of sports games, the cricket coverage is focused on Pakistan team and Muslim players in it, rather than players in the English team. When it comes to cricket, the intersectionality between religion, ethnicity, nation and race becomes stronger.

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<sup>59</sup> Highest level of cricket matches.

<sup>60</sup> The governing organisation of cricket in Pakistan.



The question of the 'English exclusivity' of cricket has triggered several debates on race and sporting patriotism. The debate has already been developed around blacks in British media with the Henderson Affair. Robert Henderson's article on black and East Asian cricket players in 1995 argued that a team of white English would do better than a mixed one, and that cultural cohesion is needed for victory. The article revealed the widespread understanding amongst cricket commentators of Englishness as a fixed cultural attribute deeply implanted in those who are deemed English. As migrants continue to bring diverse identities and cultures in England, male upper class Englishness becomes representative of the national culture (Maguire, 1993, p.295) and sport forms part of that culture. Cricket has long been associated to Englishness by the cricket community: players, commentators and fans. It is constructed as England's national sport, played in rural areas by English white players and historically popular within the aristocracy. Hence, the rise of non-white (Black and Asian) competitive cricket players in urban spaces, who "assert a competitive attitude as a means of denigrating the importance of etiquette [– central to upper class Englishness]" was faced by the cricket community with denial, criticism and exclusion (Carrington and McDonald, 2002, p.61).

But besides making its way into the rhetoric of sports commentators, the argument of the 'Englishness of cricket' was controversially advanced to serve a political statement. Norman Tebbit's controversial "Cricket test" in 1990 argued that the Englishness of ethnic minorities can be assessed by the side they cheer for in cricket games. When considering Test cricket matches where England plays against Indian sub-continent countries, Tebbit asked "which side do they cheer for (...) were they still harking back to where they came from or where they were?" (Fisher, 1990, p.4). The barometer of British Muslims' national identity is then based on their support in Cricket games: do they support Pakistan, India (the old nation) or England (the new nation)?

By the time sport became a recurrent topic reported by *the MN* (2006-2009), the premise of Tebbit's controversial Cricket Test has already been heavily contested. In their research on cricket, migration and identity, Maguire and Stead affirm that "the kind of certainty underpinning notions of national cultures and identities that Tebbit espouses is being undermined. For some first and second generation migrants, an adherence to and celebration of two or more cultures and identities is possible" (Maguire and Stead, 1996, p.18). As such, belonging to a particular religious and/or ethnic group and showing loyalty and allegiance to

a particular nation (where this group is not the majority) are not mutually exclusive even when the ‘old nation’ is competing against the ‘new nation’.

However, cricket (and sport in general) remains an important forum where national identity is exclusively expressed and glorified with flags and anthems. Players, supporters and audience could only support one team. Thus, in spite of being less controversial than the topics of conflict, terrorism and Islamophobia, sport remains a topic where different identities can be discursively constructed, juxtaposed and contested. Sport “is an arena where processes of personal identity testing and formation are conducted (...). A key feature of the sports process is that it is used by different groups, those more established, emergent or outsider migrant groups, to represent, maintain and/or challenge identities” (Ibid., p.16).

Hence, it is important to further explore the way *the MN* reports on Test cricket and navigates its controversy without falling into applying Tebbit’s reductive Cricket Test to the newspaper. How does *the MN* report cricket games between the English and Pakistan teams? The following extract from an article entitled *Ball tampering row overshadows Series* suggests a subtle unacceptance of the judges’ decision to award the game to the English team.

Extract 10:

« Pakistan forfeited the fourth Test against England after play on day four was sensationally abandoned after a ball tampering row. The umpires, Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove, ruled Pakistan were guilty of doctoring the match ball and awarded England five penalty runs and let them choose a replacement ball. The day’s play finished early when Pakistan stayed in their dressing room after tea in protest at the allegations of changing the condition of the match ball. Although they did eventually return to the field of play, by then the umpires had deemed that the match had been forfeited by Pakistan as they refused to take the field. What makes the forfeiture even more difficult to comprehend is that Pakistan were in a dominant position, with a day’s play still remaining. However, Pakistan were incensed by being labelled cheats and Hair’s involvement in this controversy fuelled their actions of a sit-in protest after the tea break. » (*Ball tampering row overshadows Series*, **Sports**, September 2006)

In this extract, the loss of Pakistan is not attributed to Pakistan’s action or inaction. Rather, it is stated as the result of the adjudicators’ decision. The adjudicators “ruled Pakistan were guilty” and “awarded England”. Pakistan only lost because the adjudicators “deemed that the

match had been forfeited by Pakistan”. *The MN* refers to the ruling as based on “allegations” and finds it “difficult to comprehend”.

That said, in the following parts of the article, *the MN* praises the performance of the English team reporting that they “fought back superbly to completely dominate the fourth”. The evaluation of the event is further illustrated in the intensive use of evaluative adverbs expressing the journalist’s attitude towards the game and its players. Thirteen adverbs were used in this article, most of which express desirability when describing the performance of both teams (e.g. “Intelligently”, “effortlessly”, “superbly”). However, while these adverbs carry a positive evaluation, other verbs and nouns in the article rather refer to a political register with negative connotations. Throughout the article, *the MN* deploys nouns such as “tension”, “sit-in”, “protest”, “controversy”, “trouble” and verbs such as “fuelled”, “stoking” and “crush” when reporting the game and the consequences of the judges’ decision.

Therefore, sport could also represent a space of contestation of national identities stimulating tension and friction. Sport is intrinsically placed in the area of conflict as it implies a degree of competition (where there is a winner and a loser), which can erupt into real conflict (e.g. Islamophobic chants), as illustrated in the following extract.

Extract 11:

« Despite such positive work, Islamophobia and racism in football is a current topic of debate after unsavoury scenes across many football grounds, both home and abroad. The case of Middlesbrough striker Mido<sup>61</sup> being subjected to Islamophobic chants by Newcastle supporters in last year’s Tyne-Tees derby a prime example. » (*Interview – I am what I am because of my religion, says Kolo Touré, Sports*, October 2008)

However, it is important to note that this is the only occurrence of the word Islamophobia in the entire Sport corpus, making its frequency 7 per million as opposed to 148 per million in *the MN* overall corpus. Additionally, the analysis of random concordance of *Pakistan team* shows a predominant interest in the news about Pakistan cricket team players and coaches. But the majority of cricket texts, albeit reporting about the Pakistan team, are not about them competing against the English team. The articles report various competitions where the Pakistan team competed with Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Ireland and England. Several articles

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<sup>61</sup> Ahmed Hossam Hussein Abdelhamid, an Egyptian football player who was a striker in Middlesbrough Football Club.

also cover news about Pakistani cricket players, particularly Shoaib Akhtar. The diversity of reported cricket teams shows the liminality of *the MN*'s reporting about cricket and Muslims (British or/and non-British). The scarcity of articles reporting competitions between English and Pakistani teams suggests a different narrative than a reductionist oppositionary one where Muslim players compete against English players. In fact, *the MN* growing interest in cricket only developed in later years of the corpus, more than ten years after Tebbit's controversy.

As such, *the MN* news on sport dilute the juxtaposition of identities that sport, as an arena for competition and the expression of national pride favours. Instead it exploits the celebratory space sport news offer to showcase Muslims excellence and integration in Britain. In fact, as shown above, the most important collocates to *British* are *title*, *champion* and *heavyweight*, and in most sentences where these collocations appear, the articles celebrate the victory of British Muslims in international competitions. Beyond single articles and extracts, it is clear that sport in *the MN* mostly represent a space to showcase British Muslim's integration in their society (British Muslims representing all British people when competing in World Championships) and an arena where patriotism and nationalism are expressed. By highlighting and collocating the national and religious identities of these champions, *the MN* offers a counter-discourse to the mainstream portrayal of Muslims (inside and outside sport arenas) as 'Others' outside 'Us'.

Besides cricket and football, keywords analysis suggests a high interest in boxing and martial arts. While cricket, football and boxing are popular sports, Pencak Silat, a martial art, is a niche sport in the UK. Keywords in this sub-corpus such as *Tunggal*, *Silat* and *Pencak* mostly refer to Muslim women winning sport Pencak Silat competitions. *The MN* interest in Pencak Silat, a martial art arguably created by a woman, is remarkable, as other forms of martial arts are not covered as frequently. It is even more striking that most Pencak Silat stories refer to female competitors, because while the sport was initiated by women, it remains dominated by men. All the articles in which *Pencak Silat* appears celebrate Hannah Alrashid, a British Muslim martial art competitor, in winning competitions inside and outside the UK, especially in the *Tunggal* category.

In fact, the top collocates of *Muslim* in this sub-corpus are *women*, *woman* and *girl*. *Women* also appeared as a top collocate in *the MN* overall corpus, but mainly appeared in stories of discrimination against women, and the debate on the veil. In the Sport sub-corpus, *Muslim women* tend to refer to the *Muslim Women's Sport Foundation* (MWSF), a UK based

organisation working on increasing the participation of Muslim women and girls in sports. The articles report on the foundation's programmes and activities. A random selection of collocations suggests an evaluation of the MWSF ("working positively") and a promotion of its work amongst readers ("to get involved... contact").

#### Concordances: *Muslim Women's Foundation*

File ID	Concordance
file316183	Rimla Akhtar is Chairperson of the Muslim <b>Women's</b> Sport <b>Foundation</b> - for further information
file316189	backgrounds. To get involved with the Muslim <b>Women's</b> Sports <b>Foundation</b> , please contact Beijing
file316179	British Muslim women in sport." The Muslim <b>Women's</b> Sport <b>Foundation</b> is working positively
file316185	sports festival, organised by the Muslim <b>Women's</b> Sports <b>Foundation</b> (MWSF) for Muslim women
file316189	first place at the tournament was the Muslim <b>Women's</b> Sports <b>Foundation</b> , which proved to be

Besides the articles on MWSF, *Muslim women* in this corpus mostly refer to female champions winning sports competitions (e.g. Sania Mirza) and to challenges to Muslim women's participation in sport. In the following random concordances of *Muslim women* these two topics are expressed with contrasting evaluative language. While the former is marked with *victory*, *hopes*, *win* and *inspire* the latter is conveyed with *banned*, *detering*, and *criticism*.

#### Concordances: *Muslim women*

File ID	Concordance
file316185	potential and showcasing the talent of British <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> and girls in the world of sport.
file316179	developing, it's important that the setup for <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> in this country is improved to allow
file316185	and this great project will ensure that <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> from towns and cities across the
file316189	Premier League. A victory for women's sports <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> from around the country salaam-dunked
file316179	detering the team from their aim of helping <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> to integrate into British society
file316182	People's Party (DF) over its criticism of <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> wearing hijab, leftist politicians
file316195	which enables them to think of others." <b>Muslim</b> <b>woman</b> banned from swimming pool A Muslim
file316183	Ghasara hopes her win would inspire other <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> to join in competitive sports. "I
file316183	obstacle to excellence. "This is a glory to all <b>Muslim</b> <b>women</b> ," said 24-year-old Ruqaya Al-Ghasara

Nevertheless, when extending some of these concordances, the two topics appear connected. *The MN* relies mainly on legitimation strategies (Van Leeuwen, 2007) to present and support its arguments that Muslim women can excel while wearing hijab, that the real challenges to Muslim women's participation in sports are environmental (e.g. set up, lack of community and financial resources), that their excellence will inspire other Muslim girls and women to participate in sports and that their engagement in sport has a positive impact on society. Employing the authorization strategy, *the MN* applies expert's authority by using quotes from people with powerful social or institutional statuses. The authority of these influential people is highlighted by referring to their institutional position (Chief Executive, Chairperson) or their achievement (Gold Medal champion).

Extract 12 below refers to the challenge of scarcity of resources available to support Muslim women in sport in non-majority Muslim countries. It uses a quote from the Chief Executive of the Football Foundation who comments on Id Sports festival as a project that ensures Muslim women participation in football. In this extract, the simultaneous referral to negative (hindered intention) and positive (uniting people, more tolerant and fair society) effects serves to establish a second legitimation strategy: rationalisation. Instrumental rationalization denotes the "justification of practices or parts of practices by reference to the purpose or function they serve, or the needs they fill, or the positive effects they will have" (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999, p.105). In extract 12, Muslim women's engagement with sport serves the purpose of uniting people and the function of attracting women to sport and fills the need "to build a more tolerant and fair society". Instrumental rationalization is also observed in extract 13, where the MWSF Chairperson appeals for improved set ups, arguing that such a change would "allow" for "winning medals" and "bringing them home". Engaging Muslim women and encouraging their participation in sport becomes a "moralized activity" (Ibid.) as positive values (bringing medals home, more tolerant and fair society) are attributed to it.

Extract 12:

« The intention to form talented teams to match those existing in countries such as Iran, has been hindered by a scarcity in community and financial support; impediments which escape those nations who identify as majority Muslim. Chief Executive of the Football Foundation, Paul Thorogood, said, "Sport has the power to unite people and this great project will ensure that Muslim women from towns and cities across the country join football in helping to build

a more tolerant and fair society.” » (*Muslim women organise Id sports festival*, **Sports**, November 2007)

Extract 13:

« “The same way that the Games<sup>62</sup> are developing, it’s important that the setup for Muslim women in this country is improved to allow us to participate in our chosen sport so that we’re not simply dreaming of winning medals, but we’re actually bringing them home!” » (*Muslim women look to the future*, **Sports**, April 2006)

Celebrating a Bahraini champion, extract 14 contains a quote by the champion affirming her win as “a glory to all Muslim women”. The quote is preceded by stating that this win is “proving that the hijab was no obstacle to excellence”. The legitimation of hijab in sport is facilitated by the rationalization strategy whereby a result is affirmed or refuted. In extract 14, the obstruction of Muslim women’s excellence in sport as an effect of wearing the hijab is refuted. According to Van Leeuwen and Wodak, such strategies of justification “attempt to maintain, support and reproduce identities” (Ibid., p.93). The religious identity of the champion is further emphasized with the use of “devout” and the representation of the champion as a representative for Muslim women athletes. The argument that a religious marker does not constitute an obstacle to excellence is further highlighted in its presentation as the title of this article.

Extract 14:

« Young Bahraini sprinter made history for Muslim women athletes after winning a well-deserved gold medal at the Asian Games on December 11, proving that the hijab was no obstacle to excellence. “This is a glory to all Muslim women,” said 24-year-old Ruqaya Al-Ghasara, who won the gold medal in the 200 metres in 23.19 seconds. The devout Muslim immediately went down on her knees after crossing the line and touched her lips and head to the track. “I’m very thankful for being a Muslim; it’s a blessing.” » (*Hijab no obstacle to Asian Gold*, **Sports**, January 2007)

In the above extracts (extracts 12, 13 and 14), several strategies of legitimation were used in representing Muslim women in sports. As Vaara and Tienari (2008, p.988) state, using multiple forms of legitimation is the most effective form of legitimation. While absent from

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<sup>62</sup> The International Women’s Islamic Games held in Iran.

mainstream press representations of Muslims, the participation of Muslim women in sport has been the subject of emerging scholarly interest showing fixed stereotypes. An interpretation of Islam rejecting sport and physical activity amongst women for jeopardizing body modesty has been perpetuated by some clerics (Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 55-56), and reinforced by victimizing media narratives around Muslim women (Poole, 2002, pp.91-92; Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.257). Even when arguing differently, studies of Muslim women and sport emphasize cultural and social restrictions that limit Muslim women's access to sport. Carroll and Hollinshead (1993, p.155) identify a tension between cultural practices of Islam and sport in 'Western' societies. Other studies on British Muslim girls' participation in sports anticipated passivity and apathy among Muslim girls. As Kay concludes from the study of a group of British Muslim girls "the girls themselves were confounding our expectations: they were far more responsive to the sports elements of the program than we anticipated (...) the assertiveness and energy they displayed appeared at odds with the 'constraints' surrounding them" (Kay, 2007, p.126). Such a dissonance could also be derived from a deep perception of Muslim girls and women as passive and uninterested in sport, succumbing in this regard to general stereotypes of Muslim women. As such, Muslims women's interest in sport could appear at odds with such constraining perceptions and expectations, as their context is defined by "varied and sometimes contradictory influences of their religion, the culture of their family's country of origin and their exposure to western values and expectations" (Ibid.). In fact, Muslim women have long expressed their frustration with "Western perceptions of Muslim women as being uninterested or unable to participate in sport and physical activity" (Dagkas, Koushkie Jahromi and Talbot, 2010, p.14). Even when Muslim women's access to sport is observed, it is explained as part of a struggle for gender equality (Hargreaves, 2000, p.47), instead of an individual interest in sport, or a general ambition for success and excellence. Finally, the participation of Muslim women in sport is further problematized with the media fixation on the physical appearance of Muslim sportswomen and the veil as a 'non-western' religious marker (Al-Hejin, 2014, p.40). This said, as studies have shown, Muslim women participation in sport remain very low, even with its recent rise (Benn, Dagkas and Jawad, 2011). This low rate is found to be mostly related to cultural and institutional barriers making their access to sport opportunities fewer than those offered to male Muslims (Benn, Pfister and Jawad, 2010, p.263).



When choosing to highlight stories of Muslim female champions, *the Muslim News* is addressing a highly controversial topic and offering an alternative representation in it. It addresses media perceptions of Muslim women as passive victims, to reframe them as active agents. With its focus on women in its sports section, *the MN* not only responds to religious claims of supposed tensions between Islamic values and women in sport, but also to journalistic representations of an imagined contrast between Islamic practices (e.g. wearing the veil) and women excellence, even in such a highly physical sector (i.e. sport). As such, *the MN* stories celebrate female sportswomen who follow such practices as they win championships.

This alternative framework of representation could serve a second function. As physical culture with its emphasis on ideal bodies and health is “more highly valued in ‘Western contexts’” than in some Muslim communities (Dagkas, Koushkie Jahromi and Talbot, 2010, p.18), *the MN* could be attempting to relocate British Muslim women (with their contested identities) at the centre of their society. Muslim women, reduced to the veiled stereotype which portrays veiling as a “‘passive’ form of radicalisation for Muslim women” (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, p.201), are hence represented outside ‘the West’. By representing them as champions in sport, a space that is endorsed and valued in their society, British Muslim women can be depicted as accepted and celebrated active members in their society. They are not passive victims of cultural barriers to their participation in sport, rather they become successful models in a space that is highly ‘Western’.

Such representations of women in *the MN* suggest a different frame of representation than those observed in *the MN* overall corpus, where *women* and *woman* appear the most in stories of discrimination (e.g. based on veil/hijab). Besides contesting stereotypes about British Muslims in general, the **Sports** section seems to serve the contestation of mainstream press portrayal of Muslim women specifically.

Beyond their entertaining function, sport news in *the MN* offer a space where the narrative about and for Muslims is reshaped and reimagined in light of their excellence, their belonging to British society and their integration. With this portrayal, Muslims become a source of pride and a symbol of success in opposition to their negative portrayal in mainstream press. When identities of British Muslims are stereotyped and demonized in the press, *the MN* finds refuge in representing Muslims in accepted and celebrated universes in the West, such as sport. It is through these universes that the representation of Muslims’ integration can be sought.

However, the ‘uniqueness’ of sport as a sole section where the success and integration of Muslims is frequently celebrated in *the MN* is also problematic as it reduces and narrows Muslims’ success to this arena. Other arenas such as politics, philanthropy, arts and academia are not marked by stories of successful British Muslims, as it may be more difficult to report such success with less controversy. In fact, studies of mainstream press find that Muslim political activists are negatively represented in the press, portraying them as “deviant and extremist, in conflict with other groups for political power and concerned only with minority interests” (Poole, 2002, p.74). The celebration of Muslims’ success in the UK seems to be only possible in sports. However, the celebration of Muslims in sport, an arena that highlights physicality, could be problematic as it can narrow the definition of Muslims’ success in their physicality rather than their intellectual (e.g. academic), a challenge that has been long faced by Blacks in Britain where the celebration of their success has been reduced to the repertoire of sport and entertainment, rather than reported in other fields such as business and science (Carrington and McDonald, 2002, pp.10-11). Studies on mainstream representations of Blacks in the UK in 1997 find them featured predominantly as athletes, entertainers and criminals. Almost half of the stories about Blacks in British newspapers were sport news, further limiting the coverage of their excellence to their physicality, and contributing to their objectification (Ross, 1998, p.234).

The increasing (and negative) focus of mainstream media on Muslims (post 9/11) could have shifted the ‘bad news’ about ethnic minorities (such as Blacks and Asians) observed in British newspapers from the 1970s to the 1990s (Van Dijk, 1991), to a new minority – one that is not ethnically defined (as Blacks or Asians only) but religiously grouped (Muslims). Conversely, *the MN* focus on excellence in sports suggests that the attempt to cover positive news about this religious minority also follows similar pattern of positive portrayal of ethnic minorities (excellence in sport). Have Muslims in the British press become the new Blacks?

## Conclusion

Studies of mainstream press discourse on Muslims in the UK find representations that perpetuate an Orientalist separatist discourse that collectivizes Muslims and stereotypes them as scroungers, terrorists, extremists and oppressors (Baker, Gabrielatos and McEnery, 2013, pp.256-257). In mainstream press, Muslims are consistently profiled within frames of representation that are limited to terrorism, conflict and violence. These media biases are intertwined with journalistic practices that favor ‘bad news’ and contribute to their newsworthiness.

While *the MN* follows newsworthy topics circulating in mainstream press, the analysis of the corpus reveals several strategies that the newspaper uses to diverge from the mainstream media discourse on Muslims. The discursive strategies used by *the MN* fall within two main streams marking *the MN* discourse compared to mainstream press: 1. *The MN* covers stories circulating in mainstream press about Muslims differently (e.g. linking terrorism to Islamophobia). 2. It also adds different stories about Muslims that are absent in the mainstream discourse. While these different stories cover ‘bad’ (e.g. discrimination) and ‘good’ news (e.g. sport), they offer alternative representations of Muslims that rarely appear in mainstream press (i.e. Muslims as victims and Muslims as champions). These two approaches emerge throughout the corpus. However, the diachronic analysis shows a tendency to intensify the use of the latter in later years.

From the early years of the corpus, *the MN* is found to follow trends established by mainstream media when selecting newsworthy stories. Topic indicators found in *the MN* match those in mainstream press: collectiveness (with words such as *community*, *world*) and conflict (*terrorism*, *war*) are consistently used in mainstream press across the studied timeframe. The recurrence of these words, however, is different than in mainstream press. Conflict, being the most predominant topic in mainstream press discourse, is the least salient compared to others in *the MN* (e.g. religion, education). This said, throughout the years, *the MN* has continued to cover stories that mainstream press focus on: the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and 7/7 have a notable presence and articles on criminal cases emerge from the analysis of keywords (such as *right* and *police*) across the years in the corpus.

However, while criminality emerges as a salient topic in mainstream press with high coverage of stories portraying Muslims as criminals, the salience of the topic in *the MN* seems to be caused by a different focus on Muslims. The diachronic analysis reveals that most stories charged with a legal discourse in *the MN* revolve around incidents of Islamophobic attacks or discrimination against Muslims (e.g. stories on far-right groups attacking Muslims, human rights abuses against Guantanamo Bay prisoners etc...). In articles on crimes where Muslims are portrayed as actors, *the MN*, unlike mainstream press, tends to report on convicted criminals, rather than suspect ones. Such articles, however, remain exceptional. Criminality emerges as a key topic mainly due to the high reporting on stories where Muslims are patients – victims of crimes, culminating at times into an entire section on Islamophobia (July – August 2005, October – November 2006 and July – December 2009). Islamophobia re-emerges across years (particularly after 2003), highlighted in titles and editorials that refer to discrimination, and/or link Islamophobia to terrorist attacks, their aftermath and countering policies (i.e. counter-terrorism).

Indeed, *the MN* leverages the newsworthiness of terrorism to develop the newsworthiness of Islamophobia through different stages. First, by using semantic prosody, *the MN* shifts the use of contentious words related to terrorism (such as *extremism*) from the realm of religion to the realm of hatred and Islamophobia. *The MN* avoids the mainstream press collocation between *Islam(ic)* and *extremism*, deconstructing the link between the two. In fact, the association only exists in *the MN* due to intertextuality where it appears as a subject of contestation. *The MN* challenges the association with contentious adjectives and nouns, using reporting verbs and strategic quotations that distance *the MN* from the association. Having deconstructed the discursive association between *extremism* and *Islam(ic)*, the newspaper condemns mainstream media and views that develop this collocation. Then, when criticizing these mainstream discursive associations, *the MN* suggests a link between their omnipresence in the media discourse and Islamophobic portrayals of Muslims. Finally, using different collocations (such as *Islamic Finance*), *the MN* relocates *Islam(ic)* within positive fields such as philanthropy, arts and knowledge.

But when using these discursive strategies countering mainstream representations, *the MN* follows trendy topics defined by mainstream media. When selecting its stories, *the MN* considers the relevance and circulation of particular news in mainstream press as important factors to assess the news values of its stories. As such *the MN* conforms to the ‘rules of the game’ in the media field whereby, as a minority press with limited audience, it would follow

trends created by mainstream press. However, as *the MN* covers what is newsworthy, it constructs the newsworthiness of *Islamophobia*. *The MN* strategically uses mainstream associations between Islam and extremism to create a new association: linking this tendency in mainstream press (i.e. collocating *Islamic* with *extremism*) to Islamophobia. In doing so, *the MN* also follows another rule in media production: responding to its readers' expectations. Accordingly, *the MN* echoes the views of its readers (observed in the **Letters** section) and possibly a wider population of British Muslims beyond its readers. As Ahmad shows, British Muslims perceive increased hostility towards them in mainstream press that they consider responsible in fuelling hatred from non-Muslims against them (Ahmad, 2006, p.981). As such, despite covering trendy mainstream topics, *the MN* uncovers the demonization and collectivization Muslims feel.

This said, it is important to acknowledge the role of *the MN* in sustaining collectivizing discourses when addressing them and attempting to counter them. *The MN* corpus shows a consistent recurrence of collectivizing nouns such as *Ummah* and *Muslim World*. The significant presence of words referring to dialogue and peace in concordances where such collectivizing words appear with *The West* could contribute to the otherness of Muslims. In reproducing these 'imagined spaces' used in divisive mainstream discourses, *the MN* discursively maintains Muslims outside 'the West', albeit in a defensive counter discourse. As such, *the MN* could reproduce mainstream patterns, representing Muslims as a monolithic group that belongs to an Ummah beyond the UK. British Muslims' belonging and allegiance to other countries has been a controversial topic in mainstream discourse despite evidence that British Muslims express patriotism and belonging towards their country (Maxwell, 2006, p.742). In *the MN*, the consistent criticism of the government's foreign policy towards Muslim-majority countries (e.g. Chechnya, Iraq and Palestine) and recurrent news about conflicts in these countries suggest that British Muslims are concerned about issues affecting Muslims outside the UK. Collectivizing Muslims as a monolithic group, with monolithic political views concerning Muslims outside the UK risks facilitating consequent processes of separation and differentiation.

Nevertheless, two tendencies observed in the data analysis suggest that *the MN* deviates from these processes: on a macro level, local and national news are found to outnumber international news significantly. *The MN* focus on news affecting Muslims in the UK suggests that its audience has a greater interest in issues and events in the UK than those taking place abroad. On a micro level, the analysis of concordances where Muslims appear

with other groups in the UK and Europe (e.g. *Muslims and Jews*) show an emphasis on shared experiences of violence and discrimination (e.g. *Muslim and Jewish gravestones damaged*, **Home News**, May 2009). Furthermore, stories reporting on milestone events (such as 7/7), which in mainstream press served to reinforce Muslims' otherness, highlight in *the MN* the similar effects of such events on Muslims as part of the general population. Muslims are hence portrayed as witnesses and victims of terrorist attacks, along with non-Muslim British citizens.

*The MN* shows a consideration of several rules in journalistic practices, such as the negativity and follow-up rule whereby newspapers highlight negative stories and relevant subjects that are already covered in the news (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001, p.278). But while playing Muslims along these media rules, *the MN* resists separating and differentiating them. In fact, it emphasizes the negative experiences Muslims share with others during these major events (being victims of terrorist attacks) portraying them as ordinary citizens. Paradoxically, *the MN* takes advantage of the news follow-up to follow on the consequences of these newsworthy events on Muslims (e.g. Islamophobic attacks) and construes a 'Muslim uniqueness'. Stories following up on terrorist attacks emphasize the discrimination and violence that Muslims face, pointing to a Muslim penalty, whereby experiences of Islamophobia and discrimination become the differentiating marker between Muslims and non-Muslims in the UK. This is observed in the omnipresence of stories of injustice and discrimination in the corpus, projecting Muslims as "a community of suffering" (Werbner, 2002, pp.69-71). Islamophobia and discrimination emerge as key topics in articles on terrorism, counter terrorism, conflict and crimes. In fact, even the presence of seemingly positive verbs collocating with Muslims (*allow, include, protect*) evoke negative experiences of exclusion and discriminatory policies and practices. Muslims are represented in *the MN* in a state of vulnerability: not only do they suffer from policies they find discriminatory (e.g. Prevent program), they are doomed to a 'terrorism conditionality' in mainstream press – their relevance in mainstream news highly depends on terrorism attacks. While playing the vulnerable state of Muslims, *the MN* points to their demonization in the media field, considering it a 'Muslim penalty'; a form of *collective punishment* (**Editorial**, October 2005).

As such, *the MN* could be engaging in a defensive discourse that relies on foregrounding Muslims' vulnerability and victimhood to counter images of terrorism and violence disseminated in mainstream press. Indeed, representing Muslims as victims allows the negation of their orientalist representation as aggressors. As Moll observes, this victimhood

transforms the image of Muslims from “an Oppositional Other against which Europe is defined to a beleaguered European minority against which the majority culture/system has sinned” (Moll, 2007, p.7).

By selecting stories on Islamophobia and discrimination, *the MN* produces negative news that are rarely covered in mainstream press, creating its own ‘bad news’ about Muslims. Indeed, its focus on these news is observed in the titles it chooses to frame stories – *Islamophobia*, *Islamophobic* and *discrimination* appear within the top frequent words in *the MN* titles. Muslims’ newsworthiness becomes derived from their state of victimhood and vulnerability rather than their agency: Muslims as victims of violence, a consequence of their mainstream representations as perpetrators of violence. Stories on terrorism are downplayed, used to foreground Islamophobia. The coverage of 9/11 for instance, a seminal event in mainstream portrayal of Muslims, does not dominate the news in *the MN*, sharing keywords and headlines with another story *the MN* highlights: Gujarat Islamophobic attacks. Articles (and editorials) reporting anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism news showcase their negative effects on Muslims. Consequently, terrorism becomes present (following 2005) mainly through its anti-thesis (anti-terrorism). In fact, terrorism, a recurrent topic in mainstream press, tends to be reported in *the MN* in single momentary stories (9/11 and 7/7) or concealed (Madrid). In contrast, articles on discriminatory anti-terrorism policies and Islamophobia become the constant in later years of analysis. Unlike mainstream press, Islamophobia becomes the constant and terrorism becomes the variable in the newsworthiness equation that *the MN* uniquely creates. With this inversion manoeuvre, *the MN* does not solely contest mainstream representations, it ‘writes back’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002) at them. At times when dominant external definitions and representations of British Muslims shape and affect their experiences of discrimination and Islamophobia, *the MN* writes back with self-defining notions of British Muslims involving their perceived and represented victimhood and extending to their reported and celebrated excellence (in sport) as discussed below.

Recurrent stories in *the MN* on criminal cases and policy debates show a tight dialectic relationship between terrorism, anti-terrorism, counter-terrorism, discrimination and Islamophobia. In its editorials, *the MN* suggests that this tight relationship stems from institutional and mainstream discursive ties: anti-terrorism policies and practices, implemented in response to terrorism, are Islamophobic. Similarly, mainstream coverage of terrorism and anti-terrorism stories demonize Muslims. These media and political discourses shape Muslims’ experiences of exclusion and alienation constructing them as a ‘suspect

community' (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009, p.646). *The MN* discusses these experiences in its editorials, accusing the government policies of racial profiling and hypocrisy in dealing with Muslim and non-Muslim (e.g. the case of British detainees). At times of heated debate on Muslims in the UK, such as the debate on the veil, *the MN* considers these discourses responsible for constructing Muslims as separate from Western societies, feeding into their alienation. *Myth*, a keyword in 2006, refers to the myth of the sword and veil in mainstream media and to simplistic narratives about Muslims that strip news about them from context and complexity. This facilitates othering Muslims with simplistic narratives.

While 'bad news' involving Muslims in mainstream press reduces their representation to frameworks of terrorism and conflict, 'bad news' in *the MN* extends to stories on Islamophobia, discrimination and racism. In the corpus, *Islamophobia* collocates with *racism* and *extremism*, and *Islamophobic* collocates the most with *attack* and *racist*. Towards recent years of analysis (2006-2009), racism, Islamophobia and extremism become further intertwined with the coverage of demonstrations against Muslims, the allegation of racial profiling in anti-terrorism practices and the news on far-right terrorists planning Islamophobic attacks (e.g. the case of Neil Lewington). The link between Islamophobia and racism has been explored in academic studies defining Islamophobia as a racialization process of Muslims, whereby Muslims (regardless of their race) become perceived as a homogenous race – their religion is henceforth "raced" (Garner and Selod, 2014, p.14). This is articulated in narratives of white Muslim converts who, following their conversion to Islam, become perceived as 'Pakistani' or 'Arab'. Describing their experiences of Islamophobia, British white converts recall being called 'White Pakis' (Suleiman, 2013b, p.37). The homogenization and degradation of Muslims (including white converts) by Islamophobic discourses, especially in the media, evoke racist propaganda observed in British media in the 1970s and 1980s against British blacks. Race has come to be defined by not only physical attributes, but also cultural ones (Ibid., p.12). As a newspaper that caters to British Muslims across their different races, the understanding of Islamophobia as a racialization process to which all British Muslims are subject allows *the MN* to engage its diverse audience and maintain the relevance of Islamophobia. But with negative and defensive counter-discourses, *the MN* keeps Muslims within contentious frameworks. Poole finds that news about Muslims moved them from "the margins of coverage in the British news media (...) – a distant object in the consciousness of the majority of the British people" to a place of "uncomfortable familiarity" (Poole, 2002, p.3). Recurrent stories on Islamophobia,



discrimination and racism could reinforce this ‘uncomfortable familiarity’. Countering the ‘terrorism conditionality’ of Muslims in mainstream press with an ‘Islamophobia conditionality’ in *the MN* could contribute to the problematization of Muslims and aggravate their penalty.

Sport, however, emerges as an alternative framework *the MN* progressively builds in recent years (2006 – 2009) that provides positive news *to* Muslims *about* Muslims. Reporting Muslims’ excellence in sports championships (mainly British, but also international Muslim sports champions) moves Muslims outside the news framework of terrorism (in mainstream press) and Islamophobia (in *the MN*). Sport news depict Muslims as role models. In individual sports such as boxing and Mixed Martial Arts, they are portrayed as heroes, and in collective ones (such as football), they are represented as role models in their teams. Their excellence is reported as an example of integration and a contribution to English and British teams. As such, sport constitutes an arena whereby Muslims can be celebrated as part of their British society, sharing similar interests with non-Muslims, and making their compatriots proud in international sport competitions. These representations are paradoxically linked to the discourse on victimhood. Indeed, sports offers a representational space where Muslims not only belong to (and accommodate to) dominant narratives on British identity, they also champion them. Unlike other news in *the MN*, sport news overwhelmingly contain positive evaluative adjectives and verbs. In spite of potentially being a space of division and tension due to its competitive nature, sport news in *the MN* tends to celebrate multiculturalism and national identity. At times when othering British Muslims is observed in mainstream press, *the MN* uses sport to showcase their national allegiance. The sub-corpus contains strong collocations between *British*, *champion* and *team*. Articles on cricket show that *the MN* dilutes the contentious juxtaposition of identities between British and/or non-British.

Sports news also supports the deconstruction of the mainstream collocation between religion and extremism. When drawing the profile of sports champions, *the MN* depicts religious commitment as an important factor that contributes to their success. It argues that religious practices reinforce self-discipline, a crucial quality in competitive sports. Unlike mainstream press where religious devotion is linked to extremism and terrorism, commitment to Islam is described as a driver of success rather than a motivator of hatred. As such, *the MN* interacts with dominant mainstream representations, using its text in a transformative function whereby the association between Islam and extremism transforms in earlier years to an

association between Islam and victimhood (with Islamophobia), and lately metamorphoses into an association between Islam and excellence (with Sport).

In the face of negative media representations, sport, with its principles of fair play, is a quintessential space for Muslims to fairly win. At times when Muslims could be ‘losing’ in society (being subjects to Islamophobia and discrimination) and in the media (being portrayed negatively), sport allows them to ‘win’ fairly. This is particularly relevant in the representation of Muslim women. In mainstream press, Muslim women are portrayed as passive and oppressed. The veil that some Muslim women wear is construed as a marker of separation. Sport allows *the MN* to counter this separation by normalizing Muslim women and uniting them with the rest of the British society through this shared interest. In fact, stories on Muslim female champions celebrate their agency and excellence in this valued activity in society. Not only do sport news offer alternative images of Muslim women than those observed in mainstream press, it also diversifies their representation beyond their portrayal in the rest of *the MN* corpus, where women mainly appear as victims of discrimination and Islamophobia.

However, the focus on sport as the main space to celebrate Muslims’ success could reduce their excellence to physicality rather than intellect. Just like negative news on minority groups in the UK shifted from demonizing British Blacks from the 1970s to the 1990s to demonizing British Muslims, Muslims risk becoming ‘the new Blacks’ when limiting the coverage of their excellence to sport, a tendency observed in mainstream media representing Black sportswomen and men as ‘brainless athletes’. *The MN* interest in Muslims’ excellence seems to extend, albeit to a lesser extent, to other fields such as economics (e.g. news about Muhammad Yunus). *The Muslim News Awards for Excellence*, a yearly event founded in 2000 to acknowledge British Muslims’ contribution to society, recognizes Muslims’ achievements in various categories, ranging from arts to health, engineering and entrepreneurship. Indeed, the award occupies an important place in the newspaper’s coverage, tagging two yearly sections of the newspaper (*The Muslim News Awards for Excellence* and *the Muslim News Awards for Excellence Shortlist*) from 2001 onwards.

Although sport news, excellence awards and consequent celebratory positive news broaden the definition of British Muslims’ success, their presence as the main alternative narrative about Muslims risks reinforcing binary representations of them (the good Muslim vs the bad Muslim). Just like Islamophilia works with Islamophobia in stereotyping Muslims by

bypassing Muslims' diversity and the complexity of their experiences and issues (Shryock, 2010, pp.9-10), solely relying on exceptional individuals (e.g. sport champions, Nobel Prize winners) to counter negative representations can strip British Muslims from their diversity and reinforce binary representations. Overcoming the binary good Muslim/ bad Muslim representations involves not only a diversification of news about Muslims, but also depicting them in a variety of situations, contexts and roles (such as their depiction as witnesses of terrorist attacks). The study of other sections in the newspaper (such as the **Matrimonial** section, the advertisements and the seasonal articles on Eid celebrations and Ramadan) could reveal profiles that normalize and 'banalize' Muslims, depicting them in situations of everyday life. Singling out other sections (besides sport) for further exploration of the data would be useful in complementing my analysis, particularly with the use of other methods (such as multimodal analysis to analyse photos and ads). The study of other sections would extend the analysis to less prominent data: while the matrimonial section, for instance, has been consistently present in all *the MN* issues, its content did not emerge in keywords analysis as did the content of the sport section.

'Normalizing' Muslims by representing them in a multitude and a variety of situations would be a difficult editorial choice to make and a harder discursive strategy to detect in the data. In an industry that relies on sensationalism, prominence and significance, the ordinary is extraordinarily covered. However, other Muslim print media (such *Emel*, a life-style magazine) that privilege soft news (entertainment, arts, life style) could offer an avenue of research on Muslims representation that enriches this study. Hence, it is important to not consider this study representative of British Muslim press in the UK. Although *the MN* is the oldest sustained Muslim newspaper, it is not representative of the multitude and diverse voices of Muslims in the UK. Studies of other newspapers, as well as other media (radios, TVs and online platforms) could shed light on other topics of interest to Muslims in the UK.

Moreover, the findings of this study remain limited to its twelve years timeframe. The study of *the MN* coverage of seminal events following 2009 (when this analysis stopped); such as the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and its terrorist attacks in the UK, as well as Brexit, could reveal further consistencies and differences in the newspaper's discourse. With the British Muslim population growth and increased visibility in recent years, an analysis of *the MN* content in later years (2009 until today) would be valuable in complementing this study.

Besides the singularity of my source of data (*the MN*), its limited timeframe (1998-2009) and the research focus on the most prominent data (keywords, collocations), it is important to recognize the methodological limitations of this study. Unlike the study of readership attitudes and reception analysis (Hall, 2001, pp.164-166), linguistic analysis does not offer reliable predictions of the impact discourses could have on audiences. For instance, the effect of the revealed collocations would need to be tested with other participatory methods (such as conducting surveys and focus groups with *the MN* readers). Indeed, studies suggest that consumers of minority media, being exposed to both mainstream and alternative representations, are more demanding towards minority media and more critical of mainstream media (Georgiou, 2002, p.60). Moreover, editorial decisions (such as selecting stories, choosing titles) could be further exposed with interviews (with journalists, editor, publisher) and/or an ethnographic approach that observes *the MN*'s working place and practices. Therefore, this study remains limited to its chosen focus on the discursive representations in texts.

Comparing representations in texts created by a Muslim newspaper and those produced by mainstream press further exposes mainstream Orientalist discourses. Muslims' self-representation(s) and definitions as expressed in *the MN* stand in defiance of their subjugating 'external definition' (Werbner, 1991, p.77) observed in mainstream media. As such, *the MN* fulfills a unique function, as other Muslim minority media, to serve "the dual role of simultaneously deconstructing mainstream discourse through a construction of their own discursive alternative" (Moll, 2007, p.4). Topics emerging from the **Letters** section in the newspaper suggest that *the MN*, in covering issues faced by the Muslim minority (e.g. Islamophobia), responds to its readers' expectations. As such, *the MN*, while adapting to mainstream trends, represents an epitome of alternative minority media: it provides a platform for Muslim voices to express their views and report news as they see them. In fact, in its website, the newspaper promotes its work emphasizing that, "in its 25 years of publication, [*the MN*] has highlighted some of the media's and establishment's institutionalised Islamophobia on various issues – political (both domestic & international), education, employment & religion". Indeed, *the MN* encourages its readers to report Islamophobic attacks, possibly transcending its role of representation to that of mobilization.

However, it is the news about Muslim champions – which break from the 'doomed' discursive cycle of terrorism and Islamophobia that exemplify the alternative discourses Muslim press can offer. Beyond engaging in apologetic discourses by taking the blame out of

Muslims and shedding light on their victimhood, stories of British Muslims excelling in their society could be a ‘game changer’ in the way media plays Muslims. Recent big data research suggests that positive news about stereotyped minorities, unlike apologetic discourses, could change public attitudes. This is revealed by the instantaneous analysis of Google searches in the USA during a speech by Barack Obama following the San Bernardino attack<sup>63</sup>. Although the speech focused on rejecting discrimination and promoting tolerance, ‘hate’ searches such as “kill Muslims” tripled during the speech as Obama continued to separate Islam from terrorism. In contrast, following one of the speech lines in which Obama referred to Muslim Americans co-workers, sport heroes and neighbors, “for the first time in more than a year, the top Googled noun after “Muslim” was not “terrorists”, “extremists”, or “refugees”. It was “athletes”, followed by “soldiers”.” And, in fact, “athletes” kept the top spot for a full day afterwards” (Stephens Davidowitz, 2017). The study suggests that defensive and apologetic discourses only remind the public of the mainstream discourse of blame. Instead, portraying Muslims outside the loop of terrorism and discrimination with positive images can change dominant perceptions. While big data studies on the impact of media discourses on public attitudes are still nascent, exploring the dialectic exchange between (social) media and its audience would be useful in analyzing consistent and changing discourse representations. Undoubtedly, as reader response theory shows, “meanings are constructed by active readers: they are not derivable from texts in a passive way” (Stubbs, 1996, p.4).

News about sport champions allows *the MN* to move away from the framework of a Muslim penalty, playing Muslims differently and pitching them in the media field. As a minority newspaper, *the MN* fulfills a distinctive role by countering hegemonic mainstream representations of Muslims and responding to its audience’s expectations. As such, *the MN* falls within the definition of ‘alternative’ media in that it addresses a specific community of a diverse group (British Muslims from different ethnicities and in different parts of the UK), carries counter-hegemonic discourses and asserts self-representation. The data analysis shows that *the MN*, as observed in alternative media, offers “ideologies, representations and discourses that vary from those originating in the mainstream media” (Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier, 2007, p.18). Hence, *the MN* promises innovative frameworks of Muslims representation which could eventually be adopted by mainstream press.

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<sup>63</sup> A terrorist mass shooting attack carried by a Muslim American couple in Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California on December 2, 2015.

By offering new frameworks of representation, *the MN* itself moves from a position of submission – submitting to the trends of mainstream press, to the powerful discourse of the war on terrorism and to the media rules and criteria of newsworthiness, to a position of agency. While covering newsworthy topics allows *the MN* to remain relevant within the media industry, negotiating mainstream representations and subjugating them to highlight Muslims' excellence keeps *the MN* relevant within its Muslim audience. Its focus on Islamophobia allows it to counter these mainstream representations with a defensive discourse throughout most of its issues. However, by surpassing this counter discourse in later years (after 2006) with its focus on sport, *the MN* moves to a position of agency that breaks the terrorism/Islamophobia conditionality proposing alternative representations (i.e. Muslims as sport champions). In post-colonial studies emerging out of Said's Orientalism, texts are found to assert themselves by foregrounding the tension with dominant discourses, countering external representations and emphasizing the texts' difference from the assumptions perpetuated by dominant voices. In countering the mainstream portrayal of Muslims and introducing new definitions of them as champions, *the MN* defiantly 'writes back' to mainstream press representations. Indeed, while media representations can legitimize and inscribe dominant discourses, *the MN* discourse plays a transformative role that challenges power relations with its countering and alternative representations.

As such, as the oldest enduring Muslim newspaper in the UK, *the Muslim News*, transcends covering mainstream newsworthy topics to redefine Muslims and negotiate their media portrayal. In the media field, a site of contestation where representations can be reproduced and/or negotiated, *the MN* plays Muslims beyond penalties of hegemonic media discourses by offering alternative and new frameworks of representation that pitch and champion British Muslims as valuable players in their society.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Word list

Top 100 frequent words in *the MN* corpus

	Word	Frequency
1.	Muslim	18463
2.	said	11105
3.	were	10503
4.	Muslims	9095
5.	been	8960
6.	had	7664
7.	will	7632
8.	people	6665
9.	would	6037
10.	community	5334
11.	more	5229
12.	do	4721
13.	can	4634
14.	British	4539
15.	Islamic	4491
16.	only	4402
17.	being	4382
18.	News	3993
19.	Government	3917
20.	Islam	3838
21.	time	3580
22.	world	3350
23.	should	3287
24.	two	3282
25.	London	3224

	Word	Frequency
51.	support	2109
52.	school	2100
53.	need	2039
54.	Israeli	2014
55.	Council	2003
56.	make	1965
57.	Minister	1942
58.	schools	1921
59.	take	1850
60.	communities	1735
61.	part	1726
62.	West	1712
63.	life	1708
64.	Palestinian	1695
65.	Secretary	1694
66.	right	1692
67.	family	1690
68.	place	1676
69.	society	1660
70.	Pakistan	1660
71.	Labour	1631
72.	see	1622
73.	Law	1606
74.	number	1599
75.	case	1592

26.	many	3211
27.	first	3208
28.	very	3180
29.	Britain	3084
30.	years	3072
31.	US	3019
32.	police	2809
33.	could	2736
34.	made	2708
35.	country	2658
36.	year	2648
37.	did	2645
38.	new	2613
39.	now	2587
40.	Israel	2581
41.	women	2570
42.	religious	2565
43.	most	2484
44.	UK	2478
45.	children	2380
46.	last	2350
47.	work	2338
48.	political	2221
49.	Iraq	2182
50.	war	2140

76.	public	1572
77.	rights	1570
78.	get	1562
79.	day	1524
80.	issue	1521
81.	does	1518
82.	state	1516
83.	faith	1500
84.	young	1500
85.	terrorism	1494
86.	Dr	1492
87.	local	1483
88.	groups	1475
89.	issues	1457
90.	say	1456
91.	religion	1448
92.	must	1448
93.	think	1445
94.	want	1434
95.	human	1429
96.	help	1423
97.	still	1420
98.	countries	1417
99.	international	1402
100.	group	1375



## **Appendix B: Article from the Special Supplement of *the MN***

*The 'War on Terror', Special Supplement, October 2006*

Most people in the world oppose the so-called 'War on Terror'. Some think it is just an excuse and another name for a war on Islam. Young men and women have trained, organised and died on that basis. Millions hate Bush (and Blair) because they think that, on the scales of history, the dead of Gaza do not weigh less than those who died in the Twin Towers on September 9, 2001 (9/11). The hypocrisy of the powerful has never before been so clear. But despite the existence of this global majority, millions in the West, including many Muslims, still support the 'War on Terror'. US and British re-action to 9/11 stands against a background refrain of the defence of a common culture, and of 'Western civilisation' or 'the democracies', who apparently, have a shared history and proud values to defend. This is an entirely constructed notion. Does our common 'Western heritage' include Nazi history, black segregation in the US, Vietnam or British colonialism? Emotional attachment to our new, fake community, designed to create a new sense of who is now 'inside' and who is 'outside', is being fastened with lashings of the same sort of media mood music we experienced after the death of Lady Diana. Yet far from all in the West, let alone Britain, subscribe to this view or indeed support any part of it. The new myths that we all belong to a shared community in the West exclude the experience of millions. For some groups, that exclusion has helped the emergence of identity politics. They have rejected assimilation into this freshly minted Western norm and are developing their own identities with a loyalty not tethered to any inaccessible and unaccountable community called 'the west'. The militant and dispossessed with no sense of geographical or national boundary sees opposition to the West in whatever form as justified and even – in the absence of any alternative explanation – a sacred duty. The 'War on Terror' has been described as the first war against an abstract noun. The endless TV reruns of 9/11 fix in a lot of British minds the picture of a monstrous bolt from the blue. The images weave a mystery around an event, from which the 'War on Terror' appeared to emerge. The event has no history (except its own), no causes, no ancestors. Instead 9/11 stands alone, the signpost to the new century with Bush and Blair set about dividing the world with the challenge – 'you are either with us or against us'. Gone is the effort to understand why 9/11 (or indeed 7/7) happened. We are left with media stories of a weird pathology that allowed 'normal' people to slip into 'evil'. Gone is the understanding of the

huge interests that oppose each other in today's world. The generations of Palestinians that have fought for dignity, the scramble for the planet's energy led by the US, the West's creation of an Islamic buffer out of the young men and women who fought the old Soviet Union, the latest war of the mighty against the poor and dispossessed of the world. All gone. Gone is the need to explain, to understand, to think. Against this race away from reason, we might ask some questions. Why is the state of Israel the least safe place on earth for Jewish people? Why are 'suicide bombers' in-human and cluster bombers standing up for democracy? Why is the endless, anonymous violence of a system that kills 50,000 children a day through starvation allowed to continue? This violence has no five star General. But it holds sway over half of humanity. The old nationalism that held sway among nations and populations have been 'defeated' around the world yet the 'hammer and the anvil' of Western empire-building ring down harder than ever before. So what takes the place of the old ideas is rage and hatred. Nearly as often as we see the pictures of the Twin Towers in the West, film of supposedly murderous mobs in Pakistan, Indonesia and Iraq, uncomprehending and incomprehensible, rolls before our eyes which allow the rulers and media magnates to shout (after creating icons of free speech out of the publication of racist jibes) 'this is precisely why we are defending ourselves!' But who are 'we?' And who are 'we' defending? And whereabouts in the world are 'we' defending them? It's politics. The US rulers have launched a struggle – years in preparation – to secure 'their' resources. They have identified 'the enemy'; it is yesterday's friend and strategic ally. All the battles of the world for any sort of justice are winding their way around this huge offensive and the resistance to it. The key to it all? Stop the real war. Don't be stupefied. Imran Khan Imran Khan is a lawyer and human rights campaigner.

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